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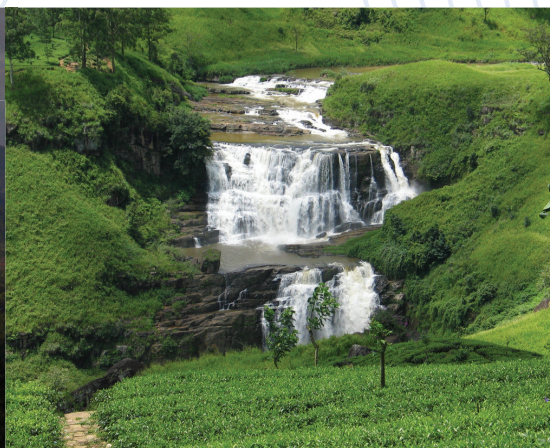
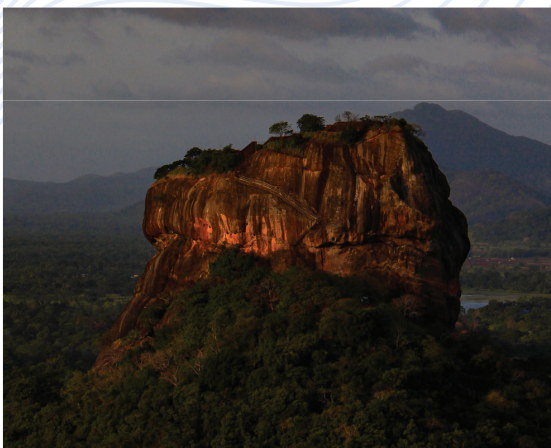
**67th TAAI Convention
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Scintillating Sri Lanka beckons all

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Members Speak

'Looking forward to attending TAAI Convention & gaining Knowledge'
TAAI Conventions, over the years, are not just about networking, good food and fun – they are mainly about seeing a new country, networking with the local tour operators of that destination to seek more business opportunities and gain valuable insights/ knowledge from the Business Sessions and Talks. TAAI Chapter Chairmen across India agree to the same.



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सत्यमेव जयते



G Kishan Reddy

Union Minister of Tourism, Culture, and DoNER,
Government of India

I extend my heartiest congratulations on the occasion of the 67th TAAI Convention under the banner of the Indian Travel Congress in Colombo, Sri Lanka from July 6th — 9th, 2023. Sri Lanka is a beautiful country, and I am hopeful that the Indian tour operators will create good synergy with the local tour operators of Sri Lanka and collectively work on a road map, which will increase the tourist traffic between the two countries. The participation of senior Government Officials from the Sri Lankan Government signifies the importance of this Convention for the tourism of the island country.

Encouraging inbound travel, particularly in the backdrop of India's G20 Presidency as well as grand celebrations of India@75 Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, the Ministry of Tourism is celebrating this year as 'Visit India Year 2023'. Harnessing the momentum created by the recovery of the global industry, preferential sentiment from global travellers for exploring India, and building upon the success of growing tourism in India over the years the tourism Ministry is on a mission to unlock the untapped potential of tourism in India, making India a 365-day destination.

I wish Ms. Jyoti Mayal, President TAAI, its office bearers, and delegates a very successful 67th Convention & Exhibition.

Date: 03 July, 2023

Place : New Delhi



Mr. Harin Fernando
Minister of Tourism, Sri Lanka

It is with inordinate pleasure I pen a few words at the request of the President of the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) at a time when TAAI is on the verge of having their 67th Convention in Colombo, Sri Lanka from 6 to 9 July, 2023.

The President of TAAI, M/s Jyoti Mayal, a true friend of Sri Lanka has shown confidence in Sri Lanka in deciding to have this all-important event in Serendipity. As the Minister of Tourism, I give my personal assurance that as host we would ensure the best to make this key convention a roaring success. There could not have been a better place than the "Pearl of the Indian Ocean" for an event of great stature.

I consider the opportunity provided as a privilege to showcase Sri Lanka from many different dimensions. Having close ties and many similarities between the countries, the delegates will be privy to find out for themselves of the hidden treasures to be shared with their peers and clients back home.

India is an important tourist generating market for Sri Lanka. It is claimed that destinations which have Played host to TAAI in the past have seen a considerable surge in arrivals of Indian tourists as a result of TAAI members serving as emissaries for the host country.

Whilst looking forward to welcoming Jyoti and her members to beautiful Sri Lanka, together with the travel trade I assure the best ensuring that happy memories of a successful conference will dawdle for many years.

Dear Esteemed Members,

As the President of the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI), it gives me immense pleasure to welcome you all to our 67th Convention which is being held in the vibrant city of Colombo, Sri Lanka, from July 6 – 9, 2023. This significant event, organised in association with the Sri Lanka Association of Inbound Tour Operators (SLAITO) & hosted by Sri Lankan Tourism Promotion Bureau is an exciting opportunity for us to collaborate and share insights on the evolving travel industry.

This year's convention is being attended by more than 500 delegates from various sectors of tourism, aviation & hospitality, along with 50 members of the media & will focus on 'Transcending Borders – Transforming Lives'. The theme not only reflects our ambition to expand our horizons but also underlines our commitment to making travel a transformative experience that enriches lives.

In this fast-paced world, people are no longer satisfied with the traditional modes of travel. The quest for new adventures and fresh destinations is driving the industry to evolve. This thought has made us focus firmly on the future, as we embrace the change and adapt to the shifting preferences of the modern traveller.

The focus of the Convention this year is completely Futuristic. The pandemic is the past, though it was tragic, brutal and truly devastating, the time is now right for us to move forward. When we talk about Transcending Borders, I am talking about crossing borders of countries physically because Tourism doesn't need any borders. Tourism brings prosperity and drives peace and is the economic driver & the backbone of every country. My thought goes beyond the Transcending Borders, because in life, we have to transcend all our fixed thoughts and break the glass ceiling.. Tourism is changing dramatically; today travellers are not interested in proto type of travel. They are looking for new adventures and new untouched destinations. Every human being needs to evolve physically & mentally. We together need to focus on sustainable growth and not live in our past. We need to Transcend minds to Transform lives. Only when we become frontrunners, can we take the society with us. Let us forget about the past and let's focus on the future, that is what we aim to deliver at the 67th TAAI Convention and I am confident that the 2 days of deliberations will benefit all present & we will go back home enriched with the rich experiences of Sri Lanka & evolved knowledge in our minds.

India's relationship with BIMSTEC countries presents a significant opportunity for enhancing tourism ties. This will be a key area of discussion at our convention, along with adaption of new strategies to foster stronger collaboration and mutually beneficial partnerships.

Sri Lanka has already welcomed around 75,000 Indian visitors this year until April 30, making India its biggest source market for tourism & will continue to benefit from our presence, Sri Lankan counterparts are eager to roll out the red carpet for our Indian delegates, setting the stage for a fruitful exchange of ideas and business prospects.

The convention this year is also bringing together 150-200 tourism stakeholders from Sri Lanka, providing an excellent platform for Indian tour operators to interact, exchange ideas, and build strong business relations that will fortify tourism ties between our two nations.

The outbound travel sector from India is witnessing significant growth, with more people taking holidays and seeking new, unexplored destinations. This changing landscape calls for a recalibration of strategy across the industry. Hotels must innovate to deliver unique experiences, while airlines must strive to offer competitive rates, facilitating balanced tourism growth. The recent large aircraft inventory orders by Air India and IndiGo are positive indicators of growth and optimism within the Indian aviation sector.

Looking ahead, the Indian market will undoubtedly become one of the most sought-after markets globally, given the immense potential for outbound travel. As we gather in Colombo, let us seize this opportunity to explore these trends, share our insights, and work together to shape a future where travel transcends borders and truly transforms lives.

Thank you for your continued support and participation. I look forward to welcoming you all at the 67th TAAI Convention in Colombo.

Best Regards,

Jyoti Mayal
President, TAAI





Jay Bhatia
Vice President, TAAI

Dear Delegate Colleagues,

It is with great pride and joy that we welcome you all to our 67th Convention – Indian Travel Congress, taking place in the splendid city of Colombo, Sri Lanka. This Congress, organised in collaboration with the Sri Lanka Association of Inbound Tour Operators (SLAITO) and with the Support of Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau (SLTPB), the event represents a compelling opportunity to witness and participate in the evolution of our dynamic industry.

The theme of our convention, “Transcending Borders – Transforming Lives”, resonates with the changing perspectives towards travel and tourism by today’s evolved travellers. Today’s travellers are explorers, seeking unique experiences and fresh destinations, prompting us to adapt and evolve our services accordingly. Our focus at the convention will be unmistakably futuristic, embracing the emerging trends and shaping the future of travel with the support of technology and innovation.

As we convene with over 500 delegates, including tourism and aviation stakeholders and members of the media, we’re thrilled to be guests of a nation that has already welcomed around 75,000 Indian tourists this year alone. Sri Lanka’s warm hospitality and rich cultural heritage make it an excellent setting to foster discussions on enhancing tourism ties, not only with Sri Lanka but with the BIMSTEC countries as well.

Our convention will serve as a conduit for fostering stronger bi-lateral relationships between India and Sri Lanka. With around 200 Sri Lankan tourism stakeholders participating in the B2B sessions, we expect this event to be a fruitful venue for networking and establishing strong business relations. Such interaction is vital in harnessing the growth of outbound travel from India and channelling it towards destinations that offer new, exciting experiences. We shall be upskilled and educated on the products and services offered by our partners in Sri Lanka.

The current landscape of the industry demands innovation and adaptation. Hotels must strive to offer unique experiences that cater to the changing preferences of travellers, while airlines must consider offering competitive rates to stimulate and sustain tourism growth. The recent sizeable aircraft orders by Indian Airline Companies, affirm the buoyancy and potential of the Indian aviation sector.

The Indian market, with its vast potential for outbound travel, is poised to become one of the most desirable markets worldwide and one of the largest source market for global tourism. It is upon us to seize this opportunity and guide our industry towards a future where travel not only transcends borders but also transforms lives.

We eagerly await the chance to engage with you all at the 67th TAAI Convention in Colombo together with networking, business sessions, fun and frolic. Together, let’s write the next chapter of travel and tourism from India.

Warm Regards,




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Lokesh Bettaiah
Hon. Secretary General, TAAI

Dear Members and Industry Colleagues,

As the Hon. Secretary General of TAAI (Travel Agents Association of India), it is with anticipation and delight that I look forward to our forthcoming 67th Convention and Exhibition. From July 6 – 9, 2023, the vibrant city of Colombo, Sri Lanka, will play host to our event, in association with the Sri Lanka Association of Inbound Tour Operators (SLAITO).

This year, we are set to embrace the future. Our theme, "Transcending Borders – Transforming Lives," reflects the shifting paradigms of travel. As the global travel landscape evolves, so do travellers' expectations. People are not interested in the same type of travel. They are looking for new adventures and fresh destinations. So just as you have evolved, your mind needs to evolve too. So, we need to focus on how growth can happen and not live in our past. We need to transcend minds to transform lives. Only when we become frontrunners, we can take the society with us. Let us forget about the past and let's focus on future, which is exactly what we are aiming to do at our Convention and I am sure that will benefit the members immensely.

We look forward to welcoming more than 500 delegates, encompassing all spheres of Tourism and Aviation stakeholders, along with members of the media, to this landmark event. This gathering symbolises an important juncture in the history of TAAI, serving as a platform to forge stronger ties with BIMSTEC countries, a key focus of our convention. The convention will bring together 150-200 tourism stakeholders from Sri Lanka, fostering an environment of collaboration and shared growth. As we exchange cards and build relationships, we lay the foundation for a future where our respective nations benefit from a strengthened tourism partnership.

With around 75,000 Indian visitors to Sri Lanka just this year, we are enthusiastic about strengthening the bond between our nations further during the convention.

In conclusion, the 67th TAAI Convention in Colombo, Sri Lanka, represents an opportunity for us all. An opportunity to transcend borders, transform lives, and shape the future of travel. I am eager to share this experience with all of you.



Shreeram Patel

Treasurer, TAAI

Dear Esteemed Colleagues and Fellow Members,

As the Treasurer of the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI), it's my pleasure to extend my warm regards to you all in anticipation of our upcoming 67th Convention and Exhibition, taking place in the beautiful city of Colombo, Sri Lanka.

This year's convention, aptly themed 'Transcending Borders – Transforming Lives,' is designed to reflect our commitment to the evolving travel landscape. Our focus is set firmly on the future; a future in which the familiar gives way to the thrill of the new, the unexplored, and the adventurous.

With more than 500 delegates joining us, we are poised to foster a global conversation on the future of travel. The event will serve as a vibrant platform for all Tourism and Aviation stakeholders, along with representatives from the media, as we join forces to chart the course for a sustainable and innovative future in travel.

Our convention also seeks to highlight the importance of bolstering tourism ties with the BIMSTEC countries, a prospect that holds great promise for the growth and diversification of our industry. We believe there is immense potential for a mutually beneficial relationship between the two nations – India and Sri Lanka. The convention will facilitate an exchange of ideas and insights with 150-200 Sri Lankan tourism stakeholders. This will undoubtedly foster stronger alliances and further our collective aim of enriching the tourism experience between our two nations.

As we bear witness to a resurgence in outbound travel from India, it is evident that the preferences of Indian travellers are changing. Our industry must adapt to these shifts, whether by offering novel destinations, upgrading hotel experiences, or ensuring more affordable air travel. The massive aircraft orders by Air India and IndiGo are positive indicators of our readiness to meet these evolving demands.

In conclusion, the Indian market holds significant potential as a prime focus for global tourism. The 67th TAAI Convention is an ideal platform to showcase this potential, and I look forward to the fruitful dialogues and partnerships that will surely emerge from this event.

With best wishes,



Mr. Chalaka Gajabahu

Chairperson, Sri Lanka Tourism

It is with great pleasure that I write this message on the occasion of "67 Convention of Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI)" to be held in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau is pleased to be associated with the 67 TAAI Convention in Sri Lanka from 06 – 09 July, 2023 as the main sponsor and we wish to extend our fullest support to Sri Lanka Association of Inbound Tour Operators (SLAITO) to organize a productive event in Sri Lanka.

We are pleased to hold the Convention in Colombo to enhance relationships of India - Sri Lanka travel trade and media as well as promote Sri Lanka as an attractive destination for Indians, which includes promoting tourism experiences attracting, creating a positive perception in the minds of prospective travellers from India. Focusing the Indian tourist arrivals and direct flight connectivity to Sri Lanka, this would be the appropriate time to create and increase the awareness of the mind of an Indian traveller and this is an opportunity to welcome Indian travellers to our beautiful island which has a great potential in attracting tourists to product segments such as heritage & culture, Buddhist and Spiritual tours, Wedding & Honeymoon, Film Tourism, Sports, Ramayana Trail, Nightlife, Festivals, etc.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the President, Board Members and all the membership of TAAI and wish every success in the convention in Sri Lanka!



Mr. Nishad Wijetunga

President, Sri Lanka Association of Inbound Tour Operators

On behalf of the Sri Lanka Association of Inbound Tour Operators (SLAITO), it gives me great pleasure in extending a warm welcome to the Board and Members, of the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI). We are indeed grateful to Ms. Jyoti Mayal, President of TAAI, her board and membership, for believing in Sri Lanka and selecting Sri Lanka as the Host country for your 67th annual Convention.

We are working tirelessly to organise the various aspects of the event, including state-of-the-art convention facilities, comfortable accommodation, and a range of engaging activities for the delegates. Our dedicated team at SLAITO are working closely with the TAAI team to tailor the convention to meet your specific requirements and ensure a seamless experience for all participants.

I am sure this TAAI Convention will provide an ideal platform for industry professionals to connect, and that Sri Lanka's enchanting offerings will captivate the delegates, providing them with a memorable experience both personally and professionally.

I firmly believe that this convention will contribute significantly to the promotion of tourism between our two countries as well as in strengthening of ties between two great nations at large, and our associations in particular.

I wish this 67th Annual TAAI Convention all success!

Activities undertaken by TAAI Chapters across India



TAAI Jammu and Kashmir Chapter

On April 26, 2023, The Department of Tourism, Kashmir hosted a Model G20 Summit in Srinagar, wherein TAAI participated. The opening ceremony of the event was presided over by Abid Rasheed Shah, Secretary to the Government of Jammu & Kashmir, Department of Tourism and Culture.

Meeting with Secretary of Tourism, Syed Abid Rasheed Shah on May 5, 2023 at TRC Srinagar in which TAAI JK raised the issue of cancellation of Go Air tickets. Abid assured attendees that utmost efforts would be made to prevent tourists from suffering due to flight ticket cancellations. The consultation meeting witnessed active participation from a wide range of stakeholders, including shikara-wallas, hoteliers, tour and travel operators, and other key players in the tourism industry.

At the G-20 Summit TAAI, which was held from May 22 – 24, 2023 at SKICC, President Mrs. Jyoti Mayal along with many other members of TAAI attended the meeting and other related events. A large number of delegates from India and abroad attended the same.

The 4th Bimonthly meeting of the TAAI JK Chapter was held on June 2, 2023 at the picturesque Hotel Robusta Retreat-The Lakeside Villa in Srinagar. Syed Abid Rasheed Shah, Secre-

tary of Tourism, and Bahram P. Zadeh, Managing Committee Member and Chairman of the Membership Council, Travel Agent Association of India graced the occasion as special invitees. Also present at the meeting were Ather Yameen Narwari, Chairman, TAAI J&K Chapter, Sameer Baktoo, Secretary, TAAI J&K Chapter, Irshad Hazari, Treasurer, TAAI J&K Chapter, and several prominent travel and tourism players from the UT.





TAAI Pune Chapter

TAAI Pune Chapter conducted an insightful and details meeting with VFS Global to help address the queries of its members.



TAAI Nagpur Chapter

- Training session by Ms. Yogita Jaiswal on 10X Leadership
- Interactive session with VFS
- Destination ICELAND TRAINING PROGRAM conducted for the members
- Presentation by Global Odyssey
- Arranged FAM Trip to Iran for TAAI Nagpur Chapter members
- Industry Update by Dy. Director, MTDC, Mr. Prashant Sawai, on current developments and opportunities in Vidarbha Region



TAAI Goa Chapter

As per the guidance from the Leadership Team, TAAI Goa Chapter conducted its regular meetings with the members thereby getting to know various issues faced by the membership and trying to resolve the same as best as they could at the local level. When needed, help was sought and provided by the Managing Committee, which is ably led by President Ms. Jyoti Mayal. The chapter met with the Hon.

Minister for Tourism, Government of Goa Mr. Rohan Khaunte to brief him about TAAI and have requested him to have TAAI representatives on Goa Tourism Board. They also arranged for an interactive session for the members with the VFS team to highlight various issues faced by the membership during scheduling of VFS appointments and other important matters.



TAAI South Gujarat Chapter

During the chapter meet held on March 15, 2023, Chapter members were invited to attend a road show organised by TTJ-Travel Mart at Surat. At the Mart, members attended and interacted with many DMC'S throughout India, which helped them gain a lot of insight. On June 15, 2023, the SGCCI (South Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and Industries), Surat, had

its 1st Travel Conclave, supported by TAAI-SGC. Speakers from the Government of Gujarat Tourism Board and dignitaries from the hotel and travel industries gave good knowledge on guiding our guests for a safe, friendly & enjoyable vacation booked through an agency. There was a Question-and-Answer round which was moderated by the Chapter Chairman.





TAAI Karnataka Chapter

- TAAI Karnataka Chapter continued to conduct its bi-monthly meetings
- A Workshop was conducted on Visas processing by VFS
- A Members' Visit was organised to Terminal 2 of the Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru to understand the operations of the airport.



TAAI Southern Region

- TAAI SR Chairman Devaki Thiyagarajan met Hon. Sri Lanka Tourism Minister Mr. Harin Fernando in Chennai.
- TAAI SR had an exclusive meeting with Mr. Chalaka Gajabahu, Chairman, Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau and Mr. Thisum Jayasuriya, Chairman, Sri Lanka Convention Bureau.
- TAAI SR played a match of Cricket, which was conducted by Emirates.



TAAI Madhya Pradesh & Chhattisgarh Chapter (MP& CG)

- Udaipur FAM and 2nd chapter meeting: TAAI MP & CG chapter had organised Udaipur FAM and their 2nd chapter meeting at the City of Lakes - Udaipur from March 18 – 20, 2023. The Slogan was 'PADHARO MAHRA DESH'. Around 40 agents participated in the event. The hosted hotels were - Spectrum Spa & Resort, Justa Hotels and Raffles
- World Heritage Day: On April 18, 2023 TAAI MP & CG members celebrated World Heritage Day. Renowned History teller Mr. Zafar Ansari explained about the history of Gandhi Hall and various interesting facts about Indore.
- World Museum Day: With Madhya Pradesh Tourism TAAI MP & CG, chapter celebrated World Museum Day at Lal-baugh. Minister of Tourism Ms. Usha Thakur inaugurated an audio guide on this day.
- TCS Session (Zoom): A Zoom session with Mr. Manish Gadia was organised for TAAI MP & CG members. Mr. Gadia cleared the doubts of members.



TAAI Kerala Chapter

- TAAI Kerala Chapter held its 4th Chapter meeting on May 28, 2023 at Vedanta Cochin. In the meeting members raised their concern about the TCS to be introduced effective July 1 and about the VFS issues. Mr. Ramesh from VFS Cochin also participated in the meeting.
- Nominated Kerala Chapter Chairperson as one of the advisory board members of Kerala Tourism Board.
- Colombo Tourism Board organised their Road Show at Cochin. The previous chapter chairman Mr. K.N. Sastry along with Hon. Secretary attended the meeting. There was good participation from the industry.
- Nepal Tourism Board organised their road show at Radisson Blu, Cochin. Chairperson and members attended the meeting.



TAAI-Western Region

- The 5th Western Region TAAI meet was held on June 7, 2023 at Jade Gardens Mumbai. They had an interactive session on TCS and a product update from IDFC Bank along with their unique offerings for TAAI representatives. The evening continued with networking sessions along with the trade including airlines and visa partners which was appreciated by all
- On March 9, 2023, the Chapter had a meeting with Bellissima, which was co-hosted by Blade India.



TAAI-Rajasthan Chapter

- On March 15, 2023, Chapter Chairman Manoj Kumar Sogani along with members Nitin Dune had a meeting with Shri. Vishvendra Singh ji, Minister of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan at his residence. He was invited to join as chief guest for the Marathon Run 'अतुल्य भारत' with members of TAAI.
- TAAI Rajasthan Chapter organised a presentation by VFS to help its members on March 15, 2023. The move was well appreciated by TAAI members.
- On April 2, 2023 TAAI represented in a procession organised by the Government of Rajasthan, Department of Tourism and Culture on the occasion of 'राजस्थान स्थापना दिवस'.
- On April 16, 2023 the chapter has a very successful event "Run for tourism 'अतुल्य भारत रन'" in which many participants had a lot of fun. Health, heritage, culture, tradition and tourism added mileage to the TAAI event. 'अतुल्य भारत' Marathon' was organised by TAAI with special thanks to member Mr. Nitin Dube.
- Adani Airport and TAAI got on a video conference meeting to discuss on the proposed projects at Jaipur International Airport, Rajasthan.
- On May 13, 2023, a presentation was held on TCS and for benefits of our members.



TAAI—South Tamil Nadu Chapter

- The Chapter conducted its regular bi monthly meeting on May 10, 2023. Keeping up with its commitment of regularly keeping in touch with industry partners, the Chapter arranged meetings with the following industry partners – Scoot Airlines Ltd, Trichy; Malaysia Tourism Board; DMC from Cambodia, Dubai, Malaysia and Singapore and As-sego Travel Insurance company.
- Chapter Chairmen alongwith TAAI SR Chairperson, M.C. Members from South Tamil Nadu Chapter and Southern Region met Dr. Manivasan Principal Secretary Tourism for Govt of Tamil Nadu at his office in Secretariat to invite him for TAAI 67th Convention to be held at Colombo.



TAAI Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand Chapter (UP & UK)

- TAAI UP & UK chapter and TAAI Members actively Participated in TTJ in Uttar Pradesh.
- TAAIUP & UK chapter and TAAI Members actively Participated at Indira Gandhi Pratishthan, to promote Domestic & inbound tourism in Uttar Pradesh.
- The Tourism & Hospitality Skill Council (THSC) conducted a 150-hours training programme for 25 women from marginalized communities at the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendra in Lucknow. Under this programme, which was supported by VFS Global and Travel Agents Association of India, all participants underwent employment-linked training and were successfully placed in full-time jobs in the Hospitality and Tourism sectors.
- A Shiva Shakti Play was held at the Assi Ghat Varanasi on May 14, 2023. Almost 7000 plus people gathered at Assi Ghat along with the TAAI members to see this historical play.
- The second Integration Meeting of TAAI UP & UK Chapter was held from May 20 -21, 2023. The trip was organized at Shyam Sarovar Portico Orrai. Members along with the Airline partners & consolidators travelled to Orrai for discussing the serious issues which Travel Agents are facing these days.





TAAI Andhra Pradesh & Telangana Chapter

- The Telangana & AP Chapter friendly cricket match was held on February 5, 2023 at the National Institute of Tourism Management's Cricket Pitch in Hyderabad. All front-line staff of airlines and travel agencies, airline officials, travel agency owners and sponsors were present with so much camaraderie in the air.
- Telangana and AP Chapter gathered on May 22, 2023 to discuss NDC fares at Plaza Hotel, Hyderabad.
- Telangana and AP Chapter lost no time to quickly move with the current trends and invited Verteil Technologies the first NDC aggregator to present Verteil Direct Connect to the members of our Chapter. Fares on the Verteil platform are cheaper than on the GDS. Most of the ticket related activities like booking cancellations re issue all could be done seamlessly on their platform. Ravinder Kaur the Sales Director of Verteil spent a good evening, presenting her product and explaining the on-boarding process and related costs. It was a useful

session and many members plan to adopt it.

- Members from the Chapter quickly reacted to the Turkish embassies call and donated generously – both cash and kind for the Turkey earthquake victims' relief on February 22, 2023. The consulate thanked everyone for their timely support.



TAAI Northern Region Chapter

TAAI Northern Region Chapter, under the able Chairmanship of Mr. Neeraj Malhotra, held an educational and knowledge session on TCS for its Members at The Taj Vivanta in New Delhi. Held on June 29, 2023, the event was attended by over 65 members who were briefed by an expert on the fine details of TCS hike and how it will affect business. The detailed knowledge session was followed by Q&A wherein members got an opportunity to clear their doubts. Delectable lunch spread completed the afternoon.



TAAI Members Looking Forward to Attending Convention & Gain Knowledge

Emerging travel technology trends that are gaining popularity around the world

Back in the 90s, planning a trip meant calling up a travel agent and relying on him for everything. The process was long and gave little control to the end customer. Fast forward to 2023, thanks to technological advancement, everything can be carried out in a few clicks. From Googling about various destinations to checking ticket prices, looking for hotels and transportation, everything can be carried out from the comfort of your home. All thanks to travel technology, which can simply be described as the use of modern tech to plan a trip. Sandeep Dwivedi, Chief Operating Officer, InterGlobe Technology Quotient shares more.

The use of travel technology has revolutionised the travel industry and has made things easier not just for the travellers, but for the people in the industry as well. Here are some emerging travel technology trends that are gaining popularity around the world:

Virtual tours from the comfort of your homes

When it comes to selecting a hotel while on vacation, some travellers are very conscious of not just the rooms, but the entire surroundings of the place. To solve this problem, many hotels have started giving virtual tours of their properties to help their customers feel more secure about their choices. There are ample 360 VR videos available online

that enable travellers to experience the surroundings of a place virtually.

Augmented reality (AR)

Augmented reality (AR) is another trend that is slowly carving a niche for itself in the industry. Instead of entirely changing a person's surroundings (like in VR), AR focuses more on altering them by adding a layer of the necessary components. While you need an elaborate headset for the VR, Augmented Reality can be experienced through a smartphone or a tablet as well. As per reports, some apps are in development that will enable travellers to learn more about a particular tourism spot the moment they point their smartphone or tablet at it. The required information will display on their screens, enabling them to learn more about a particular place.

Controlling everything in a room from a single device

Imagine controlling everything in a room from a single device. This is possible through the Internet of Things (IoT), an emerging technology trend that is gaining more and more popularity as time passes. Under the IoT, various physical devices, connected through the internet, are capable of exchanging data and interacting with each other. This makes it possible for us to control them remotely. Another example of using IoT is the use of voice control devices to set up the lights' brightness in a room.

Facial Recognition Technology

As can be inferred from its name, Facial Recognition technology tries to confirm a person's identity by classifying his/her face as per various characteristics such as gender,

age, etc. The same technology is used in several smartphones as well when all you have to do is look at your phone and it unlocks. Several countries around the world use facial recognition technology at their airports to verify a passenger's details.

In August this year, Delhi and Bengaluru airports made headlines for deploying facial recognition to automate passenger entry and verification at various touchpoints. A beta version of the app, known as DigiYatra, was rolled out for passengers to pave way for a quicker travel experience for people.

AI Chatbots

At times, it is not possible to respond to a traveller's query instantly due to several factors. The AI Chatbots are super useful in these situations as they provide customers with quick resolutions 24/7. These bots are used best while answering questions that have a standard answer.

Robotics

There is no doubt that robotics is a field that is constantly evolving and generates a lot of curiosity among travellers. There are several hotels that deploy robots to greet customers, handle luggage, provide information to tourists, and so on. Another remarkable innovation that has made headlines in the past is a suitcase that follows the travellers on its own thereby eliminating the hassles of carrying a suitcase around on your trips.

With so much happening around the world, we are living in fascinating times and it won't be wrong to say that the travel industry is on the brink of a technological revolution. ■





Scintillating Sri Lanka beckons all

Lying at the southern tip of India and being separated by the Palk Strait in the Indian Ocean, Sri Lanka is indeed one of the most scenic destinations, which surely must be seen to be believed! From shopaholics to foodies, adventure enthusiasts to nature admirers, from pilgrimage to wildlife, Sri Lanka has it all. The lush green landscapes, fun trains, famous tea and flavourful food – all make Sri Lanka a completely irresistible destination. So, on your next extended holiday, head to Sri Lanka and come back with a bag full of memories!

Pallavi Sharma

Sri Lanka is a landmark destination in the ancient Spice Trail that is bursting with wonder. This tropical island is famous for its diverse landscape – from the blue seaside belt to green mountains, and the island's lavish greenery ranging from coconut palm groves to paddy fields and tea plantations, adorn by over 200 natural waterfalls. One must explore Sri Lanka's pristine beaches and visit the 'Ramayana trail' sites, UNESCO World Heritage Site of Sigiriya and fascinating history of Dambulla. Leisure, adventure and rejuvenation, Sri Lanka has it all. It is a top notch tourist destination and popularly known as the Wonder of Asia for its long preserved culture and heritage. It is the home to eight UNESCO World Heritage Site, is renowned in "Sigiriya Rock Fortress" the succession of ancient civilisations of the island, showcasing in addition some other attraction that are interesting colonial legacy of the country.

Scenic Sri Lanka

When you're ready to escape the tropical climate of the coast and lowlands, Sri Lanka has pleasure galore to satisfy you solely. Romantic landscapes, governed by rising mountains, lush forests, ocean like tanks and gushing waterfalls, that it was consid-





ered the lost paradise by many a globe trotters, who fell upon the country. The golden beaches of the country had been praised for their picture postcard views since eternity. The dusk and dawn and many human activities connected to these times of the day creates a vibrant picture along the coasts of Sri Lanka. Verdant tea plantations and rainforested peaks beckon walkers, trekkers and

those who just want to see them from a spectacular train ride. And then there are the beaches. Dazzlingly white and often untrodden, they ring the island so that no matter where you go, you'll be near a sandy gem. Should you beat the inevitable languor, you can surf and dive world-class sites without world-class crowds. And you're always just a short hop from something utterly new.

Discover Sri Lanka as biodiversity hotspot

Sri Lanka is home to abundant biological endemism in the world whether in plants or animals and is included among the top five biodiversity hotspots in the world. The island's isolation from the mainland, the heavy rainfall of the two diagonally-blowing monsoons, and the country's wide range of altitudes, have

given Sri Lanka a variation in climate and biodiversity normally found only across an entire continent. On top of that, the island has become known as the easiest place in the world to see the hitherto elusive blue whale, the largest animal to have ever lived in the planet.

Of the ninety-one species of mammals found in Sri Lanka Asian elephants, sloth bear, leopards, sambar and wild buffaloes engages the majority of the attention of wildlife enthusiast. Yet the rarest mammals of Sri Lanka are the red slender Loris, Toque Macaque, and

Purple-faced Langur, who according to IUCN clarifications are endangered due to habitat loss. The country has long claimed to have the highest amphibian species density in the world with a high concentration in the Sinharaja rainforest. Some of the known reserves from

A reformed and transformed Sri Lanka awaits Indians tourists

-Hon. Harin Fernando,
Minister of Tourism,
Sri Lanka

After the economic meltdown, things have started to get back on track with Sri Lanka and the country is now witnessing a considerable increase in tourist arrivals with India leading the way and securing the number one position. "Sri Lanka in the last few months has garnered a lot of negative news, much of which was blown out of proportion. However, we are here to assure that things are back on track in our country – the fuel supply is back, services have resumed and the country is now waiting for its tourists to come back. We are a very small economy but we have everything that a tourist wants – casinos, shopping, food, adventure and more. Going forward, we would be typing with many principles of tourism providers and form partnerships to promote our country to the world. India is a very important market for us and we would like all Indian travellers to know that a very different Sri Lanka awaits them in 2023," he said.



the pick of the bunch:

- Yala National Park
- Udawalawe National Park
- Wasgamuwa National Park
- Sinharaja Forest Reserve
- Minneriya and Kaudulla National Parks

- Mannar Island

Feel the festive side of Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is never short of festivals and celebrations. Every month brings a celebration either religious or cultural im-

portance, making Sri Lanka one of the countries with highest number of celebrations and holidays. The Sinhala-Tamil New year festival in April is the most important cultural festival in the country. The festival marks the beginning of the New Year and the end of harvesting





season. The May full moon poya day or Vesak is the most important religious celebration in Sri Lanka, where Buddhists celebrate the nativity, enlightenment and passing away of Lord Buddha with many celebrations. In August are the Esala festivals in Kandy and Kataragama. The Kataragama Esala Festival is a multi-religious festival where devotees use fire walking and extreme self-penance to show their piety to Lord Kataragama. The Kandy Esala Perahera or the Dalanda Perahera is the largest cultural parade in the world and showcases the best of Sri Lankan dancing and music and the best of the domesticated tuskers in the country.

Ancient Ayurveda from Sri Lanka is an absolute bliss

Sri Lanka continues to inspire and heal many who travelled to its shores ever since its existence was known to the world. Many who set foot on the island had considered it a part of a divine existence, it wraps its charm around its visitors, capturing their imagina-

tion with sights, sounds and flavours. Ayurveda and meditation continue to heal the bodies and minds worn out with the cares of life. The country's native healing system, Ayurveda has been perfected over more than five thousand years. Based on herbs and diet, it was region's only treatment method until



the introduction of Western Medication in the 19th Century. Meditation plays a large role in maintaining a perfect mental health. Buddhist meditation mainly deals with right mindfulness, right concentration and right view, three of the Noble eightfold paths.

Scrumptious Ceylonese cuisines

Foods in Sri Lanka can be hot or very mild or can be combination being very much a question of individual preference. Sri Lankan food is unique for their culture. Many Sinhala food items are derived from Chena cultivation. Sri Lankan cuisine plays a vital role in the islanders' life from the most auspicious Sinhala/ Hindu New Year to normal day-to-day practices. They make milk rice and special sweets with coconut milk, floor and Honey at cultural festivals. It is recognised as one of the 64 types of art, "Siu Seta kalawa". The curries come in many varieties of colours and flavours blended well with Sri Lankan Hot Spices that has a great Ayurvedic value when used in curries. ■



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'Looking forward to attending TAAI Convention & gaining Knowledge'

TAAI Conventions, over the years, are not just about networking, good food and fun – they are mainly about seeing a new country, networking with the local tour operators of that destination to seek more business opportunities and gain valuable insights / knowledge from the Business Sessions and Talks. TAAI Chapter Chairmen across India agree to the same.



Mr. ATHER YAMEEN NARWARI
Chairman, TAAI J&K Chapter

to focus on infrastructure development is the NEED but not at the cost of the Environment. Places like Sonamarg, Pahalgam Meadows is going towards the path of Destruction, proper planning should be a Priority with Expert from Austria or Switzerland should be engaged to make a comprehensive plan for Sonamarg, Pahalgam and Aru, due to fragile eco-system we have.

Professional manpower is lacking in Kashmir tourism hospitality sector like hotels and good restaurants do not have good service-oriented staff. The Government should emphasise this and create more workforce in this sector, Kashmir is totally lacking in this field.

The tourism department should run programmes for youth who can work in the hospitality and travel trade sector as short courses.

Apart from Gulmarg, Pahalgam and Sonamarg other tourist areas like Yousmarg, Gurez valley, Doodthapathari, Toshimaidan, Aharbal Waterfalls should be promoted with proper road connectivity and some facilities at these spots should be developed with a proper FRAGILE Ecosystem.

Unfortunately, due to some medical emergency at home, I won't be attending the TAAI Convention this year, but 15 members from our Chapter are going to attend the same. Irshad Hazari, Treasurer of the TAAI J&K Chapter is leading the delegation from the TAAI JK Chapter.

Moving forward, my vision for the year ahead is going



MRS. MARIYAMMA JOSE
Chairperson, TAAI Kerala Chapter

tourism, particularly pilgrimage, medical, educational, adventure and holiday tourism. The Convention, therefore, is being held at the most opportune time. This event shall strengthen the bonds between the two nations and particularly the travel, tourism and the hospitality industry. There is a saying that tourism follows trade route. The more trade flows between India and Sri Lanka the more tourism will grow. Where ever the Convention has been conducted it is a matter of fact that the tourism potential of that place has gone up. We expect that the Convention will create more avenues not only for tourism but also for other business between both countries also.

Myself and other 16 delegates from Kerala Chapter will attend the TAAI convention this year. The theme of the Convention this year - "Transcending Borders Transforming lives" resonates well with all of us. After the political and the financial meltdown Sri Lanka is recovering slowly. In the last couple of years, particularly after Covid, India and Sri Lanka have closer cooperation. India stood by Sri Lanka in its times of difficulties. Between the two neighbouring countries, there are immense possibilities for promotion of growth of

My vision for the year ahead would be to have a Membership Drive. We have a target to increase our membership by 25% during the year ahead. We are planning to have a Chartered Accountant address to brief us about TCS updates. We are planning interactions with VFS, airlines and hospitality industries. Also on the cards is to conduct training programme for our frontline staff. We have proposed to have a shuttle tournament among the members to develop better fellowship. We are also planning to have a Fam trip for the Chapter members.



MR. SAINATH DHARWATKAR
Chairman, TAAI Goa Chapter

Iam looking forward to attending the upcoming TAAI Convention. This being my second term as Chairman Goa Chapter we are working towards better bonding amongst members and thereby understanding their concerns and trying to resolve the same at state level and also with the help of our Leadership Team. Moving forward, we intend to organise more interactive sessions with various Tourism Boards, Consulates, etc. to keep our membership updated. We will work towards maintaining the dignity of TAAI with all.



MR. MEHBOOB SHAIKH
Chairman, TAAI Pune Chapter

I along with my Treasurer Mr. Zakir Syed and 12 other members will be attending the upcoming Convention from our chapter. My vision for the upcoming year is to bring more members on board the TAAI Pune Chapter. Additionally, I aim to support members with knowledge and updates on a regular basis. An example of this is the meeting we conducted at VFS Global. The TAAI Pune Chapter is working closely on industry issues with other trade bodies.

LN. MR. H.S. ASHRAF ALI
Chairman, South Tamil Nadu Chapter

Yes, with the grace of God, I would be attending the 67th Convention in Colombo this year. I wish to work for the small and medium scale agents to survive in the trade and to have direct dealing with Airlines and to generate revenue from other services such as assisting Visas, Forex purchase and Travel Insurance etc.



MR. IRSHAD MEHDI
Chairman, TAAI Nagpur Chapter

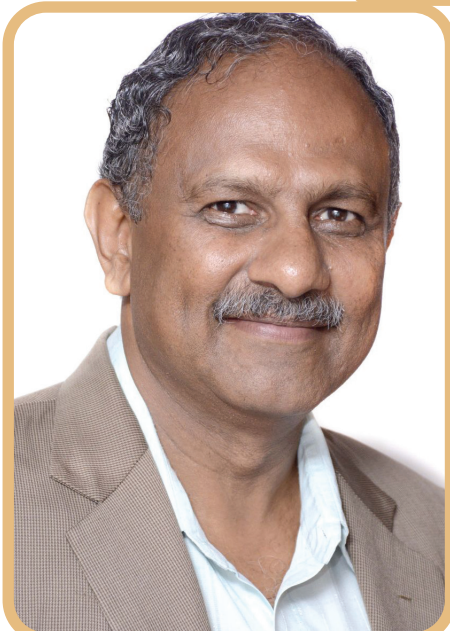
Yes, I am attending the TAAI Convention. My Vision for the year ahead is that first and foremost I would like to increase the membership of TAAI Nagpur Chapter and take the count from existing 40 members to 100 members. We have decided to arrange some quality education programs on various destinations along with the Fam Trips for our members which will benefit them to increase their sales. Last but not least, we are working very closely with members to increase the bond and unity amongst the members.



MR. MALCOM T. PANDOL
Chairman, TAAI South Gujarat
Chapter

Firstly, I would like to congratulate Madam President Mrs. Jyoti Mayal and all the Managing Committee members for making efforts in planning the 67th Convention of TAAI in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Also, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Government of Sri Lanka for hosting this grand event. I, along with the members of the South Gujarat Chapter, am thrilled to attend this convention, which will help us bond in travel and hospitality with our neighbouring country. To me, Sri Lanka is the only country where we can enjoy sunrise at a hill station, i.e., Nuwara Eliya (1828 m), and drive a couple of hours with a scenic view to enjoy the beautiful sunset on the beaches of Bentota in the evening.

Travel and Hospitality industry has got a very bright future and soon new airlines are in pipeline and we must all make good use of this opportune time.



MR. S. V. CHIDAMBAREESH
Chairman, TAAI Karnataka Chapter

Our vision for the future is to increase the membership base of the Karnataka Chapter. We also aim at promoting collaboration among members instead of competing with each other to increase the members business.



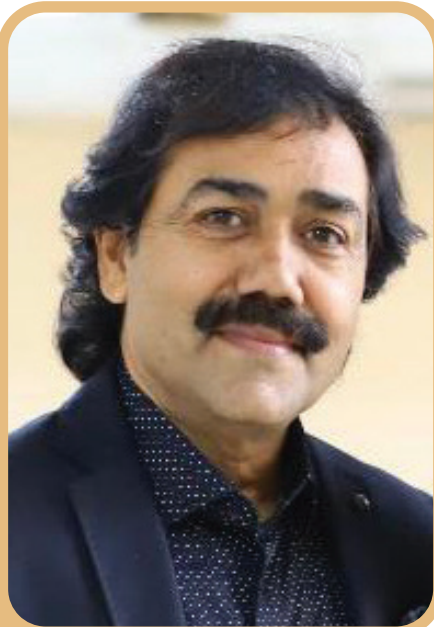
MR. HEMENDRA SINGH JADON
Chairman, TAAI MP & CG Chapter

I am looking forward to attending the TAAI Convention this year. My vision for the year ahead is clear. After the pandemic, our business came back to normal. It seems to be very good in the coming time, we all have to be ready for the good times and keep our team well trained and educated to take our business higher. The future will belong to new destinations, different products, planning of itineraries differently. With International tourism, domestic tourism will also boom so we have to concentrate on both the sides. As a Chapter Chairman, I will work for TAAI, my members and will work for the growth of whole travel and tourism. I will plan more educational programs/events for my members so that they will be benefited.



MRS. HINA SHEERAZ ZAIDI
Chairperson, Uttar Pradesh & Uttarakhand
(UP&UK) Chapter

Yes, I will be attending the TAAI convention in Sri Lanka. For the upcoming year, we are focussing on adding more members to the UP & UK CHAPTER, collaborating with the different tourism boards and hotels for product update sessions for the members. We are also signing the MoU with different renowned universities for training Tourism Students so that they are skilled enough to join the industry. TCS is a major concern for all our members and we are trying to pursue the senior officials for this major issue. Let's hope for the best.



MR. MANOJ KUMAR SOGANI

Chairman, Rajasthan Chapter

TAAI is strongest largest oldest association that we all know not only our members but in entire travel trade we have been through many years with our hard works particularly when it was needed most. Whether it's our government or others we

are always armed with dynamic leadership to ensure that everyone related should be respected, benefited with our errands, knowledge, strategies and strengths. We have to work together with other associations as well for overall development of our trade. We are facing issues with TCS & GST which are not only affecting our businesses but are also complicated to handle. Similarly, we expect from members to show their full support to our leadership team so that we can have enough confidence while handling trade related problems. I being a Chapter Chairman, am not only involved with my trade but also other trade associations also so that my voice can be heard in government when it's most needed. I am grateful to TAAI and my members who have helped me throughout my journey in TAAI and I am also available 24x7.



MR. RAJESH PODDAR

Chairman, Western Region

Yes, I am looking forward to attend the Convention this year. Conventions are a great time to connect and interact and Western Region members will definitely be participating this year. We are looking forward to meet and interact with the travel fraternity from other cities. We have a roadmap in place as our vision for the year ahead. We will work on – Credit facility from various sources, Connect the Trade to Banks / Financial institutions to pursue possible Credit facilities, develop a Talent pool, find job opportunities for students of tourism, Connect with Trade Professionals, Contact with Airline, Hotels, Tourism etc. I feel that the TCS is going to be a game-changer. Overall, the tourism industry will succeed well in the upcoming year.



MRS. DEVAKI THIYAGARAJAN Chairperson, TAAI Southern Region

Yes, I would be attending the 67th Convention of TAAI to be held in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The TAAI Convention shall make a huge Tourism impact on Economic, Socio- Cultural and Environmental of Our Neighbouring Country Sri Lanka.

TAAI being a premier association of the travel industry has always been at the forefront in spearheading the cause of the travel and tourism industry for the past several decades.

We at TAAI – Southern Region are in the process of

drawing up a roadmap for the path the association proposes to take for the coming year. Tamil Nadu has emerged as the leading domestic tourist destination in India as per the latest rankings released by the Govt. and among the top destinations among international tourists as well. TAAI – Southern Region Chapter along with its office bearers is planning to hold meetings with all the stakeholders of the travel and tourism industry and to create a safe and eco-friendly tourism initiatives where the travel agents and tour operators can put in their vast experience and efforts to put Tamil Nadu on the preferred tourist destination map of the world.

Plans are also afoot to meet experts from the Airlines Industry to come up with long lasting solutions for the problems faced by travel agents especially with regard to the insolvency proceedings of domestic carriers where steps can be taken in consultation with the government on mitigating the losses suffered by them.

Steps need to be taken to enable association members to apply for visas with their agents and mail-id and the ease of doing business methods to be worked out after due consultation.



MR. NEERAJ MALHOTRA Chairman, TAAI Northern Region

My association with TAAI and President Ma'am goes back a long way. It has been my honour to travel fraternity through TAAI. Unfortunately, this year, I would be unable to attend the TAAI Convention in Sri Lanka due to my professional commitments in Delhi. However, many members from the TAAI Northern Region are looking forward to being a part of the Convention this year. I wish the Convention a great success and I am positive that it's going to be an excellent event.

Meanwhile, we at Northern Chapter just organised a meeting wherein a presentation was made on TCS in an endeavour to make our members understand the new procedures better. Around 65 members from TAAI Northern region was part of this event that was held at Taj Ambassador, New Delhi.



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Voices from the Frontline

TAAI Members weigh in on the impending TCS increase

The extension of the implementation (from July 1 to October 1, 2023) of the new rule mandating a 20% Tax Collected at Source (TCS) on overseas tours is being viewed positively by travel industry bodies and companies. They see it as a relief, as the proper mechanisms for implementing these rules aren't yet in place. However, that does not take away the damaging impact it can cause to outbound travel from India. The increase in TCS is viewed as a significant financial hurdle by many in the travel industry, particularly as it seems to favour international operators and online portals over domestic travel agents. Here's a look at what TAAI Members feel about the same –

Jyoti Mayal, President, TAAI

The postponement in implementation of TCS from July 1 to October 1 is a small but positive step. We are happy but the struggle and fight is not over. As understood from the recently released government circular, TCS will continue to be 5% upto 7 lakhs per individual on outbound tours even after October 1, post which 20% will be levied on 7 lakhs plus spend.

If this is so, then even if not a full relief this is partial relief for our travel agents on retaining their competitiveness somewhat against the global players. We are thankful to the Hon Prime Minister & Finance Minister

for supporting our request. Going further, as President TAAI & Vice Chairperson FAITH, I think the government needs to consider the compliance deliverables on the agents. The transaction needs to be under the purview of the traveller and the bank. The agents do not have so much back-office support. Each passport is issued against Adhar card and further should be linked to pan card directly to avoid any discrepancy. Most importantly, we should in the meantime wait and push the Act till the time the entire machinery is geared up to handle it.



Amit Navlani, Honorary Secretary, TAAI MP-CG Chapter



"We are already facing challenges due to international portals offering competitive prices directly to customers. The implementation of the new TCS regulation, which is due on July 1st, is poised to hit us extremely hard. Given the high costs of travelling, it is very likely that customers will rapidly switch to international vendors and negotiate better deals directly.

International suppliers might welcome this shift as it allows them to receive payments directly without the need for

intermediaries. We also anticipate that hotels will intensify their membership drives, offering attractive deals for card payments. Major chains, including our own Taj brand and Accor, are already employing this strategy.

Previously, we functioned as consultants and support as offline agents for our customers. However, if we start charging for TCS and passengers have to wait to receive credit, it is highly likely they will seek alternatives."



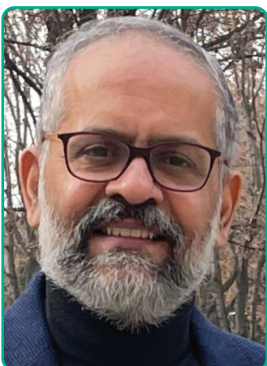
Irshad Mehdi, Chairman, TAAI Nagpur Chapter

“The implementation of TCS won’t necessarily affect the holiday business, but it’s definitely going to be a big hit to MICE Movement, weddings, and overseas business of huge volumes, which will have 20% of their money blocked for a year. To cope with this, it’s time to understand the nitty-gritty of TCS and then educate our clients properly about its application. It’s not as big an issue as it appears. A lot of negative sentiments have been spread in the market about TCS. It’s our job to create awareness about this new concept and generate business for ourselves.”

Syed Zakir, Hony. Treasurer, TAAI Pune Chapter

“TCS is unlikely to make international holidays tougher for travellers. It’s a tax collected by the seller on behalf of the government on certain prescribed transactions. The recent amendment to the Finance Act, 2020 introduced TCS on foreign remittances exceeding Rs 7 lakhs per year to promote digital transactions and capture unaccounted money. It applies only to foreign remittances and would not impact the foreign currency transaction for travel purposes. However, it’s advisable for travellers to stay updated on the latest regulations and guidelines related to foreign currency transactions and

consult a tax expert to understand the full implications of TCS. Travel agents can negotiate with vendors, such as hotel chains and airlines, to include the TCS charges in their net rates instead of adding it on top. This way, the TCS tax burden can be passed on to customers, making it more affordable for them. However, they must be transparent about it and explain the additional charges upfront to avoid any negative impact on the business. By adopting these coping strategies, travel agents can mitigate the impact of TCS on their business and continue to serve their customers efficiently.”



Puneet Arora, Hony. Secretary, TAAI Chandigarh Chapter

“TCS at 20%, introduced in the Finance Act, 2023, seems like an extreme measure to me. Most travel agents’ livelihoods depend on selling packages and planning itineraries, and this new tax will affect our income and will definitely reduce foreign tourism considerably. The coping strategy would depend upon the circumstances as and when we will be subjected to them. However, at this point, this tax seems like a catastrophe to the agents across India.”

Gurjeet Sekhon, Chairman, TAAI Punjab Chapter

“The increase of TCS on International Holidays from 5% to 20% is causing immense heartburn among travellers and travel agents. The travellers don’t want to pay an additional amount and are not enthused by the idea of a refund in due course. They are pushing travel agents to accept cash etc., which is impossible for them, and travel agents are losing business to unscrupulous people who are assuring travellers they will manage.

The change in TCS policy is causing

massive upheaval in the travel trade, giving rise to all kinds of malpractices and encouraging illegal cash transactions using the hawala route. It will also result in shrinking the travel business, and we feel it will not automatically increase domestic tourism, which was the objective of the Finance Ministry. You can’t force choices on the customer. We are all desperate and highly disappointed with the Finance Ministry’s decision, as the worst sufferers are travel agents.”



S.V. Chidambaresh, Chairman, TAAI Karnataka Chapter

"There are two things: one is the 20% TCS, and the second is that if the passenger uses a credit card, they need not pay the TCS. This is going to affect travel agents a lot, and it will become tougher to explain to the clients. This is going to increase the cost for the client, even though

they get the refund or adjust to the income tax at the end of the year. They have to pay upfront, and for the people who don't file the income tax, it's an extra cost. We are trying to explain the situation to the clients and trying to use their credit cards for booking."



Pradeep Kumar Rai, Honorary Secretary, TAAI, UP & Uttarakhand Chapter



"The impending increase in Tax Collected at Source (TCS) from 5% to 20%, taking effect from July 1st, 2023, is causing considerable concern among our customers and travel industry professionals. Despite being refundable at the fiscal year's end, the substantial fourfold jump is unsettling. The new legislation has a significant loophole - it exempts TCS up to INR 7 lakh for payments made via international credit or debit cards to international operators or online portals. This discrepancy puts our small Indian travel agents at a competitive disadvantage and could lead to larger Indian companies setting

up overseas, monopolising the industry and potentially exacerbating unemployment. It could also impact the Indian government's GST collections negatively.

Despite these challenges, our survival strategy in the travel industry is to educate customers about the tax's refundability. We must emphasise that this isn't an additional cost, as they can reclaim the TCS amount through their quarterly returns and adjust it against their advance tax. The 20% TCS might also inadvertently promote domestic tourism and necessitate more transparency during the booking process."

Param Bhatia, Secretary, TAAI Punjab Chapter

"I fail to understand why Govt is doing this hike in TCS. After all it's a refundable tax collected at source so that people may only spend the white money rather using cash. As it is it's an advance tax than why make it 20 rather 5%. This move will deprive people of using white money and on the reverse,

they will look at other means of making payment or will pay cash at the property. Even those who were ready to pay white money will also think again. This move may let Government retain the forex reserves but will promote the wrong payment moves from other countries."



Kavi Kohli, Senior Managing Committee Member, TAAI



"We, in the travel trade, were already burdened due to a recent airline going bankrupt, over and above this TCS of 20% will not only make us lose in terms of Interest but also dent our cash flow in a big way. It is a well-known fact that clients' payment to Travel agents is one of their lowest priorities. This payment of 20% which needs to be paid to us by our clients will not come immediately. Travel agents might as well stop selling such International Packages etc. TAAI has not only raised this concern with the Government departments but also requested that in case this TCS (if not reversed) the deposit be allowed to be done on receipt of such

payment from the client and not on the basis of the Invoice date.

I personally feel in case action to abolish/reverse such TCS model is not taken and also if it is demanded on raising of the invoices, it will be very difficult to cope up with our cash flow. I wish we had retention of more than 20% as profit (currently it is not more than 4 to 5%), in which case we may be able to survive otherwise it is impossible to sell international packages. Yes, if we can manage and convince our clients to pay upfront then the scenario will change. I feel Bharat Dekho should not be taken as a step towards not seeing other countries."



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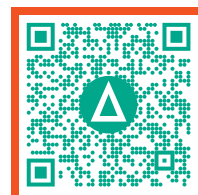
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