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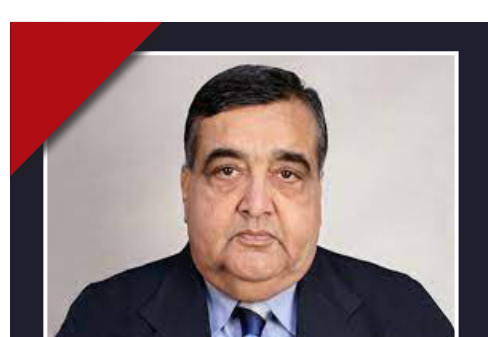
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TAFI delegation calls on Finance Secretary to seek reduction in TCS

The Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI) met the Union Finance Secretary Dr T.V. Somanathan at the Ministry of Finance to seek reduction in TCS (Tax Collected at Source) rates.

The delegation was led by TAFI President Ajay Prakash, Anil Kalsi, Ankush Nijhawan and Rajiv Aggarwal along with Vivek Shejwalkar—Member of Parliament.

After the meeting, Prakash said, “The meeting was constructive and the Finance Secretary heard us out patiently and agreed to look the suggestions which were put forth.”



Rajiv Mehra re-elected as President of IATO for 2023-24

Rajiv Mehra has been re-elected as President, unopposed, of the Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) for 2023-24. As per the IATO norms, post this appointment, Mehra won't be contesting for the post.

US aiming to process 1mn visas to Indians by year end

The US Mission has processed more than two lakh visas to India so far, and is aiming to process one million visas by the end of 2023.

This year, the US Embassy ratchet up the visa process by opening the office during weekends. Besides, the Embassy has also added more staff, expanded the scope of drop-box facilities, and opened up interview slots over the weekend.

A spokesperson from the Embassy said, “The US Mission has already processed more than two lakh applications at our Embassy and Consulates in India, and we are on track to hit our goal of processing more than a million non-immigrant visa application in 2023.



Air India to boost services in East Asia from March 26

Air India has added frequency on popular eastbound routes in its 2023 Summer Schedule, bringing more options for travellers to fly to and from Bangkok (Thailand), Hong Kong, and Seoul (South Korea).

Effective March 26 2023, Air India will add a total of eight new weekly flights: six to Bangkok (three each from Delhi and Mumbai), as well as additional weekly flights from Delhi to Seoul (Incheon) and Hong Kong.

Nipun Aggarwal, Chief Commercial and Transformation Officer, Air India, said, “Building a more robust network is a key element of Air India's Vihaan.AI 5-year transformation plan, and having boosted services on multiple routes to North America and Europe in quick succession, we are now pleased to step up services to the East.”



Centre sanctions eight floating jetty projects in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu

Under its Sagarmala Programme, the Ministry of Ports, shipping, and waterways has provided in-principle approval to four floating jetty projects in Karnataka while also giving in-principle approval to another four floating jetty projects in Tamil Nadu.

Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal, said, “Our

Hon'ble PM lays high emphasis on providing strong connectivity, which is essential for building a developed India, the installation of these jetties will be a big push for socio-economic development of these regions in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu and create new avenues for water-related tourism and regional trade with more employment opportunities to the local population.”



Sarbananda Sonowal



Saudi Arabia Announces New National Airline, Riyadh Air

Saudi Arabia is set to get a new national carrier, Riyadh Air as the Kingdom is keen to establish itself as a tourism hot spot. Saudi's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman made announcement of Riyadh Air, with industry veteran Tony Douglas as its Chief Executive.

Riyadh Air will serve more than 100 destinations around the world by 2030, making use of the Kingdom's location between Asia, Africa and Europe.

The new airline is expected to add USD 20 billion to Saudi Arabia's non-oil GDP growth and create more than 200,000 jobs both directly and indirectly.

Salil Nath takes over as GM Indian subcontinent of Etihad Airways

Etihad Airways, the national airline of the UAE, has appointed Salil Nath as General Manager of the Indian Subcontinent, to be based in New Delhi. He will be succeeding Neerja Bhatia, who is retiring after 18 years of service at Etihad Airways.

Nath will be responsible for all commercial activities across a key cluster for the Etihad network within the central region – India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives & Seychelles.

Commenting on this, Amer Khan, VP, Middle East, Africa, & The Sub-Continent, Etihad Airways, said, “India plays a crucial role in Etihad Airways' growth strategy. As we look to expand our operations, we are delighted to have Salil take up the new role, leading Etihad's commercial activities in the region.”

