

## TAFI to host its 2022 convention from September 20-23 in Malaysia

The Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI) is set to hold its convention at Kuching in Sarawak, Malaysia from September 20-23, 2022. The theme of the convention is BUILD BACK BETTER.

Elaborating on the theme, Ajay Prakash, President, TAFI, said, "As we seek recovery post-COVID, it is vital that the tourism industry does not forget the lessons of the Pandemic. As one of the biggest global industries, the power of tourism to shape the world is phenomenal. It can be a powerful force for doing good, not only for the stakeholders but for the entire world. Build Back Better encapsulates the resolve to rebuild tourism in a more responsible and sustainable manner." The Convention Committee is Chaired by Seeraj Sabharwal and Jigar Dudakiya is Deputy Chairman.



Ajay Prakash

## Tourism Fiji hoping to reach pre-pandemic tourist traffic from India by 2024



Kathy Koyamaibole

Fiji Tourism is hoping for a smooth uptick in travel from India, and strategically reaching pre-pandemic (2019) levels of tourist traffic by 2024. In 2019, Fiji

welcomed 6,000-7,000 tourists from India.

Kathy Koyamaibole, Regional Director Asia & Pacific, Tourism Fiji, said, "Since borders have opened up, we are seeing a relief from travellers wanting to explore new destinations. While it is too soon to forecast the travel demand, we are hoping to reach pre-pandemic numbers from India in 2024. Fiji offers visa-free entry to Indian passport holders, and this will aid travel from India." Currently, Fiji requires Indian tourists to be completely vaccinated, and undertake an RAT test within 72 hours upon arrival in the country.

## IndiGo to start Mumbai-Bahrain direct flights from Aug 1

IndiGo will commence new direct flights between Mumbai-Bahrain, effective August 01, 2022. With this new addition in 6E network, IndiGo will now connect to all six countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council.



Sanjay Kumar, Chief Strategy and Revenue Officer, IndiGo said, "These new flights will enhance international connectivity and bolster trade, commerce and tourism between India and Bahrain which is known for its pearl diving and trading tradition. Bahrain will be the first post covid international addition to the 6E network. We will strive to stay true to our promise of affordable fares, on-time performance, courteous and hassle-free service across wide network, onboard our lean clean flying machines."

## India needs to develop new domestic destinations to attract travellers: DG Tourism

G Kamala Vardhan Rao, Director General, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India has emphasized on the need to develop and showcase newer tourist destinations to attract more travellers from both domestic and international countries. "We should collectively work to ensure that new destinations come up with basic infrastructure," he added.

Speaking on the investment potential in tourism sector, Rao stated that tourism is the beneficiary of all the investments of various ministries and departments including national highways, rural development ministry, civil aviation, railways, etc. "Whichever department is investing in the infrastructure and services sector, it is tourism which is the beneficiary," he stated.



## Finnair to start Mumbai-Helsinki flights next month

Finnair will finally be starting non-stop flights between Mumbai and Helsinki next month. Finland's flag carrier, which started flying to Delhi from 2006 and currently has a daily



on this route, had briefly launched Mumbai flights in 2008. But the global economic meltdown forced the airline to suspend the same soon after launch.

"India is the number one growth market of Asia at the moment. We are looking at other cities in the country. Personally, I will be happy to see four destinations here in the next two years," Sakari Romu, Finnair GM, India, of commercial division.

## Taliban government to request India for visas to stranded Afghan students

The Taliban government has said that it will request India to grant visas to Afghan students enrolled in Indian educational institutions, but who haven't still been able to return to resume their courses after COVID-19 restrictions were lifted.

This is the first time the Taliban leadership has indicated that it would directly speak with Indian authorities to allow



Afghan students to resume their studies in India.

The Indian Embassy has recently re-opened but is only being manned by lower-ranked diplomats. This is being done ostensibly to coordinate the delivery of humanitarian assistance. India has still not accorded official diplomatic recognition to the Taliban government.