

LUXURY AND LIFESTYLE TRAVEL MAGAZINE

travel

SPAN

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Etihad Airways
For Limited
Edition Watch

Bhutan

Thimphu Tshechu
Festival

Penang

The Pearl of
the Orient

The
Miracle
of Underground
heat throughout
Asia

Bangkok & Hua Hin

shine for
“Redefined” MICE
of Thailand



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Editor's Letter

Govt's big push to attract tourists: One-month e-visa at flexible charges

High visa charges is one reason that makes India less attractive to tourists and so the fee is being reduced to increase footfalls and foreign exchange receipts.

The government will introduce one-month e-visa and make charges flexible, with fee for summer months — non-peak months for tourism — kept less than the rest of the year.

Leisure tourists will be charged \$10 for a 30-day e-visa for travel between April and June, and \$25 for any other month, Union Tourism Minister Prahlad Patel announced recently. Currently, India charges \$80-100 for one-year e-visa for tourists from most countries.

India attracted 10.5 million overseas tourists in 2018, far fewer than some of the other Asian countries. Singapore received 18.5 million tourists while Thailand welcomed over 38 million foreign visitors last year.

High visa charges is one reason that makes India less attractive to tourists and so the fee is being reduced to increase footfalls and foreign exchange receipts.

For e-visas of one- and five-year duration, citizens of Japan, Singapore and Sri Lanka will be charged \$25 while those from other countries will get those at \$40 and \$80, respectively.

The decision to introduce one-month e-visa for tourists with a flexible fee structure was taken at a recent meeting in the Prime Minister's Office. It was also decided to extend the

validity of e-visa from current one year to five years. A formal order on the new charges will be issued upon approval from the external affairs ministry.

April-June is considered a lean time for foreign tourist arrivals, and in 2017 around half of all arrivals were between January and March, and July and September.

December is the peak month for arrivals from all major source markets including Bangladesh, the US and the UK.

"It is a fantastic step. With this move India should be able to double its tourist arrivals in next two-three years. The move also benefits standalone destinations like Goa. India has always been a desired destination for foreign tourists but high visa charges made trips to India expensive.

Govt's Big Push to Attract Footfalls

- India received 10.5 million foreign tourists in 2018.
- Tourism ministry in 2018 had set a target to double foreign tourists by 2020.
- Countries like Thailand and Singapore attract more foreign tourists than India.

We are on



DEVENDER GROVER

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Air India

and

Korea Tourism

Organization join hands to launch the direct flight connection from Delhi to Seoul



Korea Tourism Organization and Air India joined hands to announce the launch of the new nonstop flight connection from Delhi to Seoul on 11 th September 2019 at Pride Plaza Hotel, Aerocity, New Delhi. The event witnessed more than 100 trade and media participants. The evening was addressed by Minister of Embassy of Republic of Korea in India – Mr. Jong Ho Choi and Commercial Director Air India Ms. Meenakshi Malik.

The latest updates of the destination were presented by Korea Tourism Organization and the in-flight facilities, baggage advantages and competitive prices were introduced by

Air India to travel trade partners. This first joint promotion initiative between Korea Tourism Organization and Air India intends to promote more travelers visiting from India to South Korea with Air India as their preferred airline.

The flight offers a lot of advantages over its competitors flying in the same sector. It will be the shortest duration flight flying from Delhi-Seoul with 6 hrs flying time and maximum baggage allowance of two pieces, which is 46 kgs for economy passengers.

With fares starting from INR 41,618, Air India is all set to target the Indian market with mostly the same fare offered from all the departure cities

like Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore and Chennai. Not just this, to comfort the South Korean passengers on board, the Dreamliner aircraft on this air route will serve Korean food along with the Indian vegetarian and non-vegetarian meal options.

In the year 2018 approximately 119,791 Indian tourist visited South Korea and 150,457 South Korean tourist visited India. The increasing exchange of tourists between both the countries has encouraged both the organizations to join hands and promote the destination and the new flight connection.

Talking about South Korea as a tourist destination, Ms. Meenakshi Malik, Commercial Director, Air India said “I went to Korea and I was amazed to see the development of the country especially from a digital point of view. In terms of cargo as well, there is a huge potential, especially with Make in

India and Digital India. There are not enough Indians visiting South Korea as compared to other Asian countries. We are happy to be the promoter of increased connectivity between the two countries.”

Mr. Jong Sool Kwon, Director Korea Tourism Organization New Delhi added to this by saying “South Korea is steadily growing as a preferred tourist destination amongst Indian travelers. Corporates, student groups and family groups are now requesting new destinations and South Korea has become a part of their wish list. Growing air connectivity and flight frequency will definitely be a constructive contributor for the growth of tourism numbers between both the nations.”



Post-Easter Sunday Vesak campaign on behalf of Sri Lanka

SriLankan Airlines' efforts to rebuild country's tourism recognized at APEX awards

SriLankan Airlines' intensive efforts to drive the recovery of the island's tourism industry in the aftermath of the Easter Sunday attack were honoured with a global accolade - the 'Best Marketing Innovation' award from the Airline Passenger Experience Association (APEX). The Airline also managed to secure Four-Star rating in the major airlines category, for the 3rd consecutive year.

Vipula Gunatilleka, Group Chief Executive Officer, said: "We are delighted to win this prestigious award, which we consider to be an accolade for our country at a time when our tourism industry is recovering from a disastrous situation. Credit goes to the hundreds of members of our staff who volunteered for this innovative marketing campaign that reached an audience of millions of people in a large number of countries."

SriLankan's marketing effort was chosen the winner over entries by Qatar Airways and Virgin Atlantic that were also shortlisted nominees in this category. APEX (www.apex.aero) is the world's only non-profit membership trade association, a network of the airline industry's leading airlines,

airline suppliers and related companies that is dedicated to improving the entire airline passenger experience. The awards ceremony coincided with the APEX Expo annual industry convention at the Los Angeles Convention Centre from 9-12 September. Joshua Bustos, the airline's Chief Commercial Officer, received the award on behalf of SriLankan at a glittering ceremony in Los Angeles on 9th September.

Saminda Perera, Senior Manager Marketing said: "We are delighted to receive this award for our marketing campaign 'Spirit of Vesak at BIA' which was well-received by the participants, visitors and the viewers all alike. As the National Carrier of a country that has rich traditions, our aim was to symbolize in our campaign, the cultural aspects of a national festival which portrays unity among communities, team work and of course the sense of generosity which has connotations to the doctrine of the Buddha. We have always endeavored to ensure the timeliness and universal appeal of our marketing campaigns and this award reaffirms the success of our efforts."

The campaign, which centered on the Buddhist festival of Vesak to showcase the unity and spirit of tolerance among Sri Lanka's many ethnic and religious communities, reached an audience of 7.6 million people with 1.2 million engagements via live streaming over YouTube and

Facebook that specifically targeted major tourism markets worldwide.

It was based on the 'karaniya metta sutra' that emphasized the Buddha's doctrine of boundless compassion to the world, and was carried out on Vesak, the holiest day in the calendar for Buddhists around the world.

The campaign involved a range of events at SriLankan's hub at Colombo's Bandaranaike International Airport that emphasized the message of peace through spiritual songs, intricate decorations, offering refreshments catered by none other than the Airline's catering arm - SriLankan Catering to travelers at the airport, thanking people for visiting Sri Lanka, and much more. A special choir of airline employees ranging from pilots to cabin crew, aircraft engineers, administrative staff, auditors and aircraft interior cleaning crews were trained by some of the country's top musicians to entertain travelers.

SriLankan Catering ensured continuous service during the 12-hour activation at this award-winning endeavor by delighting the travelers at BIA with refreshments.

SriLankan Airlines has a route network of 109 cities in 48 countries, including codeshare operations in partnership with the world's finest airlines. It is firmly established as one of the leading airlines in the Indian Ocean region, being the largest carrier to both Sri Lanka and the Maldives, and the largest foreign airline in India. A member of the prestigious oneworld global airline partnership, SriLankan Airlines also connects travelers to over 1,000 cities in 160 countries through its oneworld partner airlines.



Qatar Airways and China Southern Airlines Announce Code-share Agreement

Qatar Airways acquired five per cent of China

Southern Airlines in December 2018

*Agreement is the first step in the strengthening of
cooperation between both airlines*

Qatar Airways has announced codeshare cooperation with China Southern Airlines starting from January 2020*. This codeshare agreement is the first step in the strengthening of cooperation between both airlines, since Qatar Airways acquired 5 per cent of China Southern Airlines in December 2018.

This agreement will enable China Southern Airlines' passengers to book travel on Qatar Airways' flights between Guangzhou and Doha and Beijing and Doha allowing one stop connections to more than 80 destinations in the Middle East, Europe and Africa.

Qatar Airways first began flying to China in 2003 with a service from Doha



to Shanghai. Qatar Airways currently operates 45 weekly flights to seven Greater China gateways: Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou, Hangzhou, Chongqing, Chengdu and Hong Kong. In May 2018, Qatar Airways' award-winning Qsuite Business Class experience debuted in China on the Shanghai route with Beijing receiving Qsuite in December 2018.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, His Excellency Mr. Akbar Al Baker said: "In December 2018 when we announced our investment in China Southern Airlines, I noted the significant potential for cooperation between our two prestigious airlines. This codeshare agreement is the natural first step in us working together and leveraging our complementary strengths and resources to bring benefits to customers of both our airlines. Qatar Airways very much looks forward to the opportunity to further deepen our working relationship with this great airline and further enhance the travel opportunities for passengers across the globe."

China Southern Airlines Senior

We very much look forward to enhancing our cooperation in the future and working together to bring more benefits to our customers.

Vice President of International and Corporate Relations, Mr. Wu Guoxiang said: "We are very pleased to have Qatar Airways as our codeshare partner. As a Skytrax Five-Star airline, Qatar Airways' high service quality and massive network is very impressive. Through the efficient Hamad International Airport, with its first-rate service, passengers of China Southern Airlines will be able to enjoy the pleasant service to Doha. We very much look forward to enhancing our cooperation in the future and working together to bring more benefits to our customers."

A multiple award-winning airline, Qatar Airways was named 'World's

Best Airline' by the 2019 World Airline Awards, managed by international air transport rating organization Skytrax. It was also named 'Best Airline in the Middle East', 'World's Best Business Class' and 'Best Business Class Seat', in recognition of its ground-breaking Business Class experience, Qsuite. Qatar Airways is the only airline to have been awarded the coveted "Skytrax Airline of the Year" title, which is recognized as the pinnacle of excellence in the airline industry, five times.

Qatar Airways currently operates a modern fleet of more than 250 aircraft via its hub, Hamad International Airport (HIA) to more than 160 destinations worldwide. The airline has recently launched an array of exciting new destinations, including Rabat, Morocco; Izmir, Turkey; Malta; Davao, Philippines; Lisbon, Portugal; and Mogadishu, Somalia. The airline will add Langkawi, Malaysia and Gaborone, Botswana, to its extensive route network in October 2019 with Luanda, Angola; and Osaka, Japan, following in 2020.

*Subject to regulatory approval.

Qatar Airways

2018-19 Annual Report Highlights Strong Growth in Overall Revenue, up by 14 per cent year on year



Group financial results demonstrate sustained and ongoing success in the face of adversity with Cargo Business now the largest in the world and Executive Jet Business seeing 18.4 per cent growth

Qatar Airways has today published its annual report for 2018-19, highlighting the airline group's success and underlying robust financial health in the face of the continued illegal airspace blockade against the State of Qatar. Overall revenue and other operating income grew by 14 per cent annually. Passenger revenue grew by 14.3 percent with capacity (Available Seat Kilometers) growth of 13.5 per cent. Cargo revenue witnessed growth of 16.8 per cent with cargo capacity (Available Tonne Kilometers) growing 11.8 per cent annually. Executive jet revenue also witnessed substantial growth of 18.4 per cent in comparison to previous year.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, His Excellency Mr. Akbar Al Baker, said: "2018-19 was a year of achievement in the face of adversity for Qatar Airways. Despite facing challenges that are unparalleled in the airline industry, I am very proud that we have grown our fleet, expanded our network and seen overall revenue increase to QAR 48 billion (USD 13.2 billion), a rise of 14%. Passenger numbers are up, capacity as measured by available seat kilometres has risen and our Cargo business is now the largest in the world.

"2018-19 was nonetheless a challenging year and while it is disappointing that Group has registered a net loss of QAR 2.3 billion (USD 639 million) – attributable to the loss of mature routes, higher fuel costs and foreign exchange fluctuations – the underlying fundamentals of our business remain extremely robust. "Our success is due to an unwavering

belief in our strategy to give our passengers the very best, backed by the perseverance and hard work of our staff. I look forward to 2019-2020 with optimism and confidence that our growth will continue, and we will serve even more countries around the world."

The airline launched 11 new destinations during the fiscal year 2019 and has now added a total of 31 (as at 1 September 2019) since the start of the illegal blockade, growing its network to over 160 gateways around the world. The airline's fleet grew by 25 aircraft to a point where it welcomed its 250th aircraft in March 2019. With more than 300 aircraft worth more than USD 85 billion on order (including options and Letters of Intent) the group has the capacity to continue its ambitious but sustainable network expansion strategy. During the financial year, the Group further built its investment portfolio by acquiring five percent of the total issued share capital of China Southern Airlines. This shareholding sits alongside its existing holdings in airlines such as Air Italy, Cathay Pacific, IAG, JetSuite and LATAM.

Overall, QR Group invested QAR 16.1 billion (USD 4.4 billion) in acquisition of aircraft and other assets as well as acquisition of shares of international airlines during the year. 2018-19 was also a year where the airline won dozens of awards, including the 'Skytrax 'World's Best Business Class' and 'Best Airline In The Middle East', Trip Advisor's 'World's Best Business Class' and Business Travellers' 'Best Long-Haul Airline', 'Best Business Class', among many others.

Qatar Airways Group's sponsorship with FIFA remained the core of its sponsorship portfolio and 2018 produced the undoubted highlight of the sporting calendar at the FIFA World Cup in Russia. Alongside the addition of multi-year partnerships with Bayern München AG, AS Roma, Boca Juniors and the Brooklyn Nets, sports sponsorships remain a key pillar to augment the airline's commitment to bring people and communities together from across the globe..

HRANI

takes up the issue of **Non-Issuance of Commercial Airport Entry Permits (T- Pass)** with Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Civil Aviation



A delegation led by Mr. Surendra Kumar Jaiswal, President HRANI comprising of Members of Managing Committee Mr. Vinod Gulati, Mr. Vineet Taing, Mr Amit Jain along with Mrs Renu Thapliyal, Secretary General, HRANI including Mr. Bhupinder Singh, Airport Operations Manager, JW Marriott New Delhi Aerocity & Mr Pawan Khatri from Hilton Group met Sh. Yogendra Tripathi, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India, New Delhi to discuss the concern of 4 star and above hotels on new AEP guidelines 2019 by BCAS under Ministry of Civil Aviation, Govt of India.

The delegation apprised the Union Secretary Tourism that The Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) under Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) has

unveiled the new Airport Entry Permit (AEP) guidelines 2019 on August 2, 2019 wherein as per para 9.7 of said guidelines, the issuance / re-issuance of the commercial Airport Entry Permits have been abolished. As a result all commercial AEP issuance / re-issuance has been stopped.

The Commercial AEP Terminal Pass (T-pass) is issued to 4 star and above hotels on chargeable basis which gives access to Terminal Building other than Security Hold, Customs and immigration but include baggage claim area of Domestic terminal.

The issuance / re-issuance of commercial AEP is not a security concern as the hotels follow the following strict SOP to obtain the Commercial AEP from the Airport

Authority of India (AAI) which comprises BCAS Verification and AVSEC Certification including apart from Approval / Classification from Ministry of Tourism, Government of India and certification of FHRAI and its four regional associations. After clearance by the AEP committee which includes officials from AAI, BCAS and CISF, the commercial AEP is finally issued.

Mr. Surendra Kumar Jaiswal, President, HRANI submitted the Secretary Tourism that abolishing issuance of commercial AEPs is highly arbitrary and not a industry centric decision. It will result in draconian consequences such as Security Risk for Tourist, Increase in Touts and will also affect livelihood of many people in travel trade. It will also lead to substantial lay-offs and job terminations across the hotels on PAN India level, thereby further deteriorating the already worsened unemployment situation in our country. This new practice will also hurt tourism to a certain extent.

A detailed representation was submitted to the Secretary Tourism. The delegation requested him to take up the matter with Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA). Sh. Yogendra Tripathi, Secretary Tourism gave a patient and positive hearing to the delegation.

The representation has also been sent to Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) by the Association.

Bhutan

Thimphu Tshechu Festival

Little Bhutan

Big Experience...



Thimphu Tshechu held in honour of Bhutan's patron saint, Guru Padmasambhava, popularly known as Guru Rimpoche, is held from 9th to 11th of the 8th month in the Bhutanese calendar. It is held on the courtyard of the Tashichhodzong and is considered one of the most beautiful Tshechus in western Bhutan. The 2019 Thimphu Tshechu is scheduled to be held from 08th – 10th of October 2019

Festivals in the Land of the Thunder Dragon are rich and happy expressions of its ancient Buddhist culture. These festivals are held in all districts in honour of Guru Rinpoche, the saint who introduced Buddhism to Bhutan in the 8th century. Tsechus are held on auspicious days and months in the Bhutanese calendar, and last up to four days in which a series of highly stylised masked dance rituals are performed.

Festivals are also a big family and social occasions. People dress up in their finest clothes and most resplendent jewelry of coral and turquoise. They pack picnic lunches in their traditional bamboo baskets and stay all day at the festivals which are usually held in the dzongs (fortresses) or at monasteries.

Behind the scenes, the monks prepare themselves for weeks ahead of the festival, involved in deep prayer and meditation prior to the festival. The monks perform special masked dances that are inspirations of enlightened beings in history; and the Bhutanese believe that watching these mystical dances is essential to gain enlightenment.

All Bhutanese try to attend a festival at least once in a lifetime, and for many, it is an important annual affair where they consider it a blessing to be able to watch the dances. Apart from the monks, community dancers also participate in the local festivals.

The tsechus are a rich form of the oral history tradition where the Bhutanese pass on values, mythology and spiritual beliefs through the dance

dramas. Many of the tsechus culminate with a rare display of a giant silk applique thangka (painting) depicting Guru Padmasambhava or some other important Buddhist deity.

People's deep faith and devotion make these festivals a special occasion. At the same time, it is also an opportunity to join hundreds, and even thousands, of Bhutanese in taking part in an important religious and social occasion that often exudes a carnival atmosphere.

One of the biggest festivals in the Bhutan is the Thimphu Tshechu. This festival is held in the capital city for three days beginning on 10th day of the 8th month of lunar calendar. The Thimphu Tsechu was established by the 4th Temporal Ruler, Tenzing Rabgye (1638-1696) in 1670 on the





8th month of Bhutanese calendar to commemorate the birth of Guru Rinpoche.

It is held on the courtyard of the Tashichhodzong and is considered one of the most beautiful Tshechus in western Bhutan. This Tshechu is witnessed by thousands of people many of which travel from neighboring Dzongkhags (districts) to attend the festivities. The actual Tshechu is preceded by days and nights of prayer and rituals to invoke the gods. The Tsechu is a religious festival and by attending it, it is believed one gains merits. It is also a yearly social gathering where the people gather to rejoice, dressed in finery. In order that Bhutan can rejoice in continued happiness, many learned lamas established the tradition of these dances.

The deities of the Tantric teaching are invoked during these dances. Through their power and benediction, all misfortunes are annihilated, and peace and happiness reign. When it was initiated by the 4th Desi, Gyalse Tenzin Rabgay in 1867 the Tshechu consisted of only a few dances being performed strictly by monks. These were the Zhana chham and the Zhana Nga chham (Dances of the 21 Black Hats), Durdag (Dance of the Lords of the Cremation Ground), and the Tungam chham (Dance of the Terrifying Deities). The Thimphu Tshechu underwent a change in the 1950s, when the third King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, introduced numerous Boed chhams (mask dances performed by lay monks).

These additions added colour

and variation to the festival without compromising its spiritual significance. Mask dances like the Guru Tshengye (Eight Manifestations of Guru), Shaw Shachi (Dance of the Stags) are enjoyed because they are similar to stage-theater. Equally important are the Atsaras, who are more than just mere clowns. The Atsaras are the dupthobs (acharyas), who provide protection. The dances and the jesting of the Atsaras are believed to entrance evil forces and prevent them from causing harm during Tshechus. Modern Atsaras also perform short skits to disseminate health and social awareness messages. To farmers, the Tshechu is also seen as a break from farm life. It's an occasion to celebrate, receive blessings and pray for health and happiness.

Thailand

secures six PATA Grand and Gold Awards 2019

TAT's dramatic "Khon, An Aesthetic Art of Drama" poster wins a Gold Award

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) is pleased to share that its "Khon, An Aesthetic Art of Drama" poster and five other Thai tourism products and services are among the winners of the 2019 PATA Grand and Gold Awards.

Two of four prestigious PATA Grand Awards 2019 will be presented to IECD (Institut Européen de Coopération et de Développement), ASSET-H&C, Thailand and Elephant Hills Co., Ltd.

IECD, ASSET-H&C, Thailand will receive a Grand Award for Education and Training for its 'Association of Southeast Asian Social Enterprises for Training in Hospitality and Catering (ASSET-H&C)' initiative.

Elephant Hills Thailand will receive a Grand Award in the Environment category for its Elephant Hills, Thailand's First Luxury Tented Jungle Camps. This is the second consecutive year that the Camps has been awarded with this honour for its elephant conservation efforts. It was honoured for the first time in 2017 with a Gold Award in the Environmental – Ecotourism Project category.

Four of 29 PATA Gold Awards 2019 will be presented to TAT and three Thai tourism operators.



Thailand secures six PATA Grand and Gold Awards 2019

TAT's 'Khon – An Aesthetic Art of Drama' poster will receive a Gold Award in the Marketing Media – Travel Poster.

YANNA Ventures, Thailand will receive a Gold Award in the Environment – Ecotourism Project category for its Cardamom Tented Camp.

Diethelm Travel Group, Thailand will receive a Gold Award in the Marketing Media – E-Newsletter category for its Diethelm Cares project.

Destination Asia, Thailand will receive a Gold Award in the Travel Journalism – Travel Guidebook for its

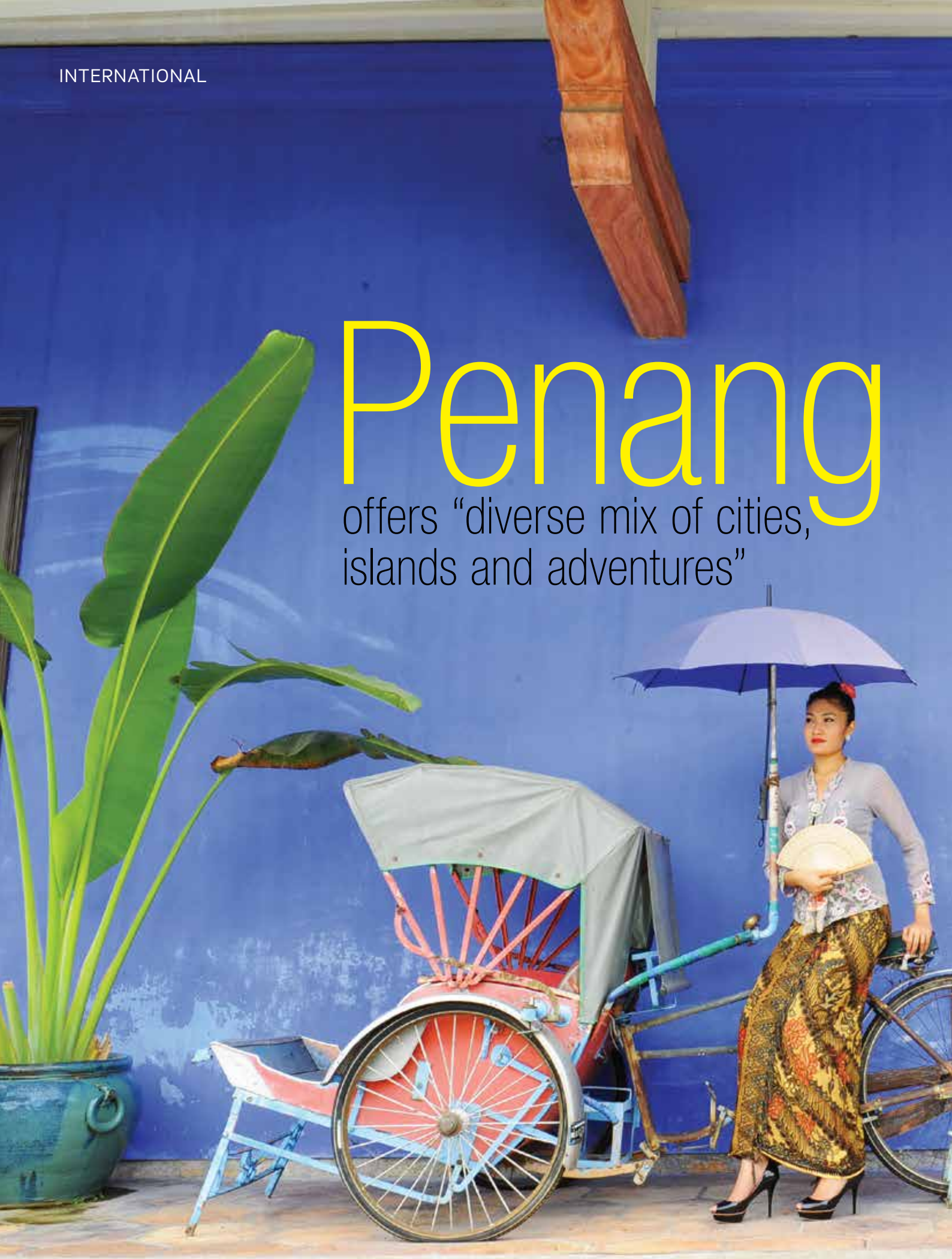
eBook on Thailand.

The six winners from Thailand will be among 27 separate organisations and individuals to receive the recognitions at the 2019 PATA Gold Awards Dinner and Award Presentation in Nur-Sultan (Astana), Kazakhstan on 19 September during the PATA Travel Mart 2019. There are in total 33 Grand and Gold Awards to be presented at the event.



Penang

offers “diverse mix of cities,
islands and adventures”





Famed throughout Asia for its heady mix of eastern cultures, Penang Island is Malaysia's prime melting pot. Roadside vendors serve some of the world's best street food; its national parks offer white-sand beaches and wildlife; and UNESCO-listed George Town is full of colorful heritage houses.

An island of rich Chinese heritage, Penang has an array of temples, ruins, museums, preserved forests, and beautiful beaches that make a trip here more than worthwhile.

Penang offers thrilling cocktail of Eastern cultures. It has long served as the link between Asia's great kingdoms and an important outlet to the markets of Europe and the Middle East. At its heart is diverse, cosmopolitan George Town, Penang Island's main city and an urban centre that delivers old-world Asia in spades, from trishaws pedalling past watermarked Chinese shophouses to blue joss smoke perfuming the air.

The freshest aspects of modern culture are present, too, in the exceptional art scene and free-spirited carnivals, all fed by an infectious local enthusiasm for Penang's long history and kaleidoscope of cultures.

Penang Experiences:

George Town: is heritage splendour

"The Pearl of the Orient", Penang, has a long and colorful heritage. Since its humble beginnings as the first British Straits Settlement in the late 18th century, George Town has undergone a tremendous transformation. From a swampy frontier to a bustling trading post to a thriving cosmopolitan city that is world-renowned for its living history, the streets of Penang are filled with vibrant nuances just waiting to be discovered by intrepid adventurers.

Combine three distinct and ancient cultures with indigenous and colonial architecture, shake for a few centuries, and garnish with some of the best food in Southeast Asia, and you've got the irresistible urban cocktail that is George Town. George Town's burgeoning street-art scene, its modern cafes and fun bars are worth enjoying. This exotic tropical island off the north-west coast of Malaysia is one of the world capitals of street food, with a dazzling array of cuisines from the island's Chinese, Malay and Indian communities. But after eating my way through everything from Hokkien black noodles, succulent giant prawns steamed in rice wine and spicy Assam laksa, to roti canai dunked in a rich lamb curry, I discovered that Penang is a lot more than just a foodie paradise.

The island is transformed since it was awarded Unesco world heritage status into one of south-east Asia's hottest destinations, now features heritage hotels, galleries, boutiques, bars and restaurants.

Exploring is best done in the morning and early evening, before the 35C heat and 95% humidity kicks in. For a hit of Penang's multicultural society and three of its main religions, start off at the ornate swirling domes of the 1803 **Kapitan Keling Mosque**. Nearby is an Indian pavement shrine



whose worshippers leave fragrant jasmine flowers and crack open coconuts, and the **Goddess of Mercy Temple**, Penang's foremost **Chinese temple**, where Buddhists light giant incense sticks and burn ritual offerings of hand-crafted paper.

Plunge into the city's maze of narrow, bustling streets whose names evoke Penang's cosmopolitan history, such as Lebu Light, named after the island's colonial founder, Francis Light, and lined with a grand Victorian town hall, the colonnaded Supreme Court and Fort Cornwallis, built by Light in 1786. There is an excellent walking tour around all the Unesco sights, but a more fun map, Marking George Town, follows a more recent heritage of striking 3D street murals created by the Lithuanian artist, Ernest Zacharevic, which attracts hordes of visitors, all intent on taking selfies alongside the murals.

Top experiences in George Town:

Blue Mansion - The most photographed building in George Town is this magnificent 38-room, 220-window mansion, built in the 1880s and rescued from ruin in the 1990s. Its distinctive blue-hued exterior is the result of an indigo-based limewash. Hour-long guided

tours explain the building's feng shui and unique features, and relate stories about Cheong Fatt Tze, the rags-to-riches Hakka merchant-trader who commissioned the mansion for his seventh wife.

The Blue Mansion blends Eastern and Western designs with louvred windows, art nouveau stained glass and beautiful floor tiles, and is a rare surviving example of the eclectic architectural style preferred by wealthy Straits Chinese.

Peranakan Mansion - This ostentatious, mint-green structure is among the most stunning restored residences in George Town. Every door, wall and archway is carved and often painted in gold leaf, and the grand rooms are furnished with majestic wood furniture featuring intricate mother-of-pearl inlay. There are displays of charming antiques, and fascinating black-and-white photos of the family in regal Chinese dress grace the walls.

The house belonged to Chung Keng Quee, a 19th-century merchant, clan leader and community pillar, as well as one of the wealthiest Peranakan of that era.

After visiting the main house, be sure to also check out Chung Keng Kwi Temple, the adjacent ancestral hall and the attached Straits Chinese Jewellery Museum, with its dazzling



INTERNATIONAL





collection of vintage bling and glittery ornamentation.

Tower Club - Bespoke Dining, Entertainment, Leisure & Business Facilities - Located on the upper floors of the iconic Komtar Tower in the heart of Georgetown, TOWER CLUB PENANG is the quintessential address for professionals to meet, dine, entertain and soak-up the simple pleasures of life, in a stylish and contemporary venue matched by quality facilities for today's discerning personality.

Spread over 4 top floors of the 68-storey tallest building in the Island of Penang dominating the island's skyline, TOWER CLUB PENANG at Komtar offers extensive meeting, dining, entertainment and relaxation spaces.

Street Art - Since wearing it's UNESCO crown, an amazing street art scene has exploded in George Town. It started with a government-commissioned exhibition back in 2008 called "Sculpture at Work". These 52 ironwork showpieces can be seen all over old town and tell the story of George Town's history and people.

Since then, more artists have been invited to create pieces upon the crumbling walls of heritage buildings. Highlights include many works by Ernest Zacharevic and Julia Volchkova.

Other significant attractions in Penang are:

Rainbow Skywalk: The Rainbow Skywalk and Observatory Deck offer stunning seamless views of George Town and beyond. Located at George Town's highest point, the open-air Rainbow Skywalk is at Level 68, on the rooftop of Komtar tower, offering visitors the thrilling experience of walking on air 816 feet above sea level. Meanwhile, the air-conditioned Observatory Deck at Level 65 also features a glass walkway that lets you watch the world go by below. On the rooftop, Coco Cabana Bar & Bistro offers great tapas food and cocktails as well as a great view. Enjoy the feeling of being on the top of the world.

Jurassic Research Center: The Jurassic Research Center brings over 200 dinosaurs back to life (with the help of the latest animatronics technology) to create a hands-on

interactive activity center of epic proportions. Meet and frolic with these creatures from millions of years ago! Find out how they used to roam the Earth! Discover the enthralling realm of dinosaurs first-hand!

7D Discovery Motion Theater: 7D Discovery Motion Theater takes you on an intensive, all-encompassing visual journey! 7D Dome brings you the latest technology in virtual reality and simulators to create new dimensions and perspectives so that instead of just watching a movie, you are actually a part of it! Definitely a not-to-be-missed experience for the entire family!

Tech Dome Penang: Tech-Dome houses over 120 interactive science and technology exhibits spread across 40,000 sqft of floor space. Its galleries on Information Technology, Life Tech, Robotics, Optics, Electro-Magnetism, Forces and Motion, Children's Exploration Zone, Penang Transformation Story, and an astronomy observatory are put together to provide an immersive and experiential presentation on the marvels of science and technology. We do this to inspire future generations.





Ocean Explorer: Ocean Explorer brings the ocean with high-resolution surrounding projectors that create a seamless and almost-reality show of the underwater realm. One can explore pristine coral reefs in a virtual submarine and meet marine life such as sharks, whales and dolphins – without getting drenched! Designed using cutting-edge technology, this attraction promises to deliver an experience on par with the real deal – perfect for audiences of all ages!

Penang Boutique Aquarium promises wealth of amazement and knowledge for all ages.

The Gravityz: offers an experience that is out of this world as it features activities involving one of the best high-altitude sports platform in ASEAN; one enjoys a breathtaking view comparable to an eagle eye's view.

Penang State Gallery: Here one can discover Penang's rich history in a jiffy

and purchase all sorts of memorabilia to commemorate your visit

Durian the King Of Fruits: The green, hedgehog-shaped “the king of fruits” is appreciated as haute cuisine to be savored like wine or truffles. Aside from knowing it as the fruit with a peculiarly foul odour to some, walk into the learning center of durian that showcases the background, the growing process, and finally the gallery that presents all types of durian.

Tongkat Ali King: Tongkat Ali, a famed Orang Asli medicinal herb from the rainforests of Malaysia that is credited to possessing a myriad of health benefits, including energy boosting, hormone balancing and aphrodisiac properties! This extensive museum dedicated to the remarkable plant lets you get acquainted with its history, growing process, and benefits that have helped humankind for centuries.

In addition to this recommended visit in Penang are - Dino Gym, Jelly

Bump, Musical Carousel, Magic Mirror Maze, UFO-X, Zombie Outbreak, Dance Oki, ARV.

Where to stay in Penang: The destination has various star hotels which can be booked for the stay. Staying at Shangri-La's Rasa Sayang Resort and Spa is just an experience. Rasa Sayang takes its name from an old Malay folk song that means ‘a feeling of love’ – exactly what you'll experience when you arrive here! A beautiful resort, it also enjoys a luxurious setting in 30-acres of lush gardens, framed by majestic ancient rain trees. Some of the world's most recognisable names have holidayed here, including celebrity author Barbara Cartland and the former King of Cambodia. A definite attraction is CHI, The Spa, the largest and most luxuriously appointed in Penang. There's also award-winning cuisine served at the Ferringi Grill, which boasts a wine cellar and cigar menu, or indulge in buffet delights at the Spice Market Café.



Malaysia to host PATA

Adventure Travel Conference and Mart 2020

The Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) announced that the PATA Adventure Travel Conference and Mart 2020 (ATCM 2020) will be held in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah at the Sutera Harbour Resort from February 12-14. The announcement was made by Mr. Iskandar Mirza Mohd Yusof, Senior Director of Corporate Communication Division - Tourism Malaysia; Ms Noredah Othman, General Director - Sabah Tourism Board, and Dr. Mario Hardy, CEO - PATA during PATA Travel Mart 2019 in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

The three-day event is generously hosted by Tourism Malaysia in

partnership with Sabah Tourism Board and Malaysia Airlines. It will be the first time that ATCM is being hosted in Malaysia.

PATA Adventure Travel Conference and Mart (ATCM) is traditionally held in February and attracts more than 200 delegates from over 25 countries. This three-day niche event, with both conference and travel mart components, brings together tourism professionals involved in adventure travel and responsible tourism to discuss creating new opportunities for promoting environmental protection and social sustainability within the industry.

The one-day conference is designed to support PATA's vision for the responsible development of tourism, while the one-day travel mart helps promote, build and strengthen business and networks for delegates.

"The PATA Adventure Travel Conference and Mart provides an exceptional platform for travel trade professionals to gain deeper insights into adventure travel trends and contribute to creating a more responsible travel and tourism industry", said PATA CEO Dr. Mario Hardy. "This event has enjoyed outstanding success in recent years,



and we are delighted to have the opportunity for the first time to focus upon the many opportunities for adventure travel and responsible tourism in Sabah, Malaysia.”

The one-day conference is designed to support PATA’s vision for the responsible development of tourism, while the one-day travel mart helps promote, build and strengthen business and networks for delegates.

Upon winning the bid to host the event, YB Datuk Mohamaddin bin Ketapi, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture, said, “Malaysia is proud and honoured to be given the opportunity to host this PATA event in Malaysia. It will be a golden opportunity for us to showcase Kota Kinabalu in Sabah, world-renowned for its nature and adventure attractions.”

“We look forward to welcoming our international guests to Malaysia for a

fruitful meeting and explorations of the beauty and rugged landscapes of Sabah,” he added.

The selection of Sabah for this niche adventure programme is ideal as the state is popular for outdoor activities. Among its natural assets are Mount Kinabalu, one of Southeast Asia’s highest peaks; the Sipadan island dive site with its great marine biodiversity; lush rainforests and flora and fauna including the Rafflesia, the world’s largest flower.

It is expected that the hosting of this event will bring greater media publicity to Malaysia as a destination for adventure travel, create awareness for Malaysia’s diverse eco-tourism and cultural product offerings, and brand Malaysia as a key player in sustainable tourism practices.

It will be a boost to attracting tourists to Malaysia in conjunction with

the Visit Malaysia 2020 campaign.

Sabah: Situated on the beautiful island of Borneo, Sabah is the second largest of thirteen states within Malaysia. It shares the island with Sarawak, Brunei and Indonesian Kalimantan. Sabah is well-connected domestically and internationally. The main gateway to Sabah is the Kota Kinabalu International Airport (KKIA) situated about 20 minutes away from the city. Presently Sabah enjoys almost 100 direct international flights that connect to major cities including Malaysia’s capital city Kuala Lumpur (via Kuala Lumpur International Airport), Seoul (Korea ROK), Hong Kong SAR and Shenzhen (China), Singapore, Jakarta (Indonesia), Taipei (Chinese Taipei), Manila (Philippines), Bandar Seri Begawan (Brunei), Tokyo (Japan) and Perth (Australia).

The **Miracle** of Underground Heat throughout Asia

Hot tubs and Jacuzzis are nice but nothing can compare to a soothing soak in one of nature's own thermal spas. Escape from stress and sink into one of Asia's hidden hot springs to feel your tension melt away. From a small mountain town in Thailand to the Malaysian forest, by the river in northern Laos to the mountains of southern Taiwan and more, these destinations will reconnect you with nature.

Pai Hot Springs, Thailand



Located in the countryside surrounding Pai in Mae Hong Son province, you will find organically-formed pools with thermal waters just deep enough to lay back in. The pools vary in temperature with the top ones being the hottest (where it is hot enough to boil an egg) then gradually cooling as they descend. Find your perfect temperature and settle in for a soak.

Where to stay: Reverie Siam offers an intimate and fresh interpretation of luxury hospitality in Pai. Inspired by the colonial architecture and cultural fusion of Southeast Asia in the early 20th century. It is an oasis of daydreams and nostalgia for a bygone era of romance and elegance.

Mudanwan Hot Springs, Taiwan



Where to Stay:

Mudanwan Villa, named after the local village Mudan, is a hot spring resort situated in Pintung, Taiwan. Set amidst remote mountains on the banks of Tou-Mu Lake, each suite features both an indoor and outdoor hot tub with sodium bicarbonate spring

water that can be adjusted to any temperature. Immerse yourself in a tranquil atmosphere featuring traditional Paiwan tribal architecture with wooden pillars carved in the shape of Chinese moccasins, a legendary Paiwan tribal symbol.

Mudanwan's various hot springs come from Taiwan's Syuhai Plain where the water contains a gentle grade of sodium bicarbonate and is known as a "Beauty Bath." Slipping into these special waters serves as a welcome respite for one's body, mind, skin and soul.

Muang La Hot Springs, Laos

Located in a charming town on the banks of the Nam Pak River, Muang La Hot Springs are surrounded by farmland, mountains and traditional villages in a beautifully picturesque corner of northern Laos. When water levels are low, a bamboo suspension bridge allows access from the hot springs to a unique area where salt is produced by a mud-leeching process.

Where to Stay: Muang La Lodge is situated in the heart of the lush, green countryside – a haven of peace and tranquility where the tradition of bathing in the hot springs at the foot of the lodge or in one of the raised hot tubs offers a remote place to unwind. Soak in secluded hot tubs steaming in the cool night air or head to a secluded pavilion for an essential oil massage.

Poring Hot Springs, Malaysia



Located 40 km southeast of the Kinabalu National Park Headquarters, Poring Hot Springs attracts visitors from around the world and is named from a Kadazandusun word for a bamboo species found in the area. Spend your day exploring the natural surrounds, walking through the lush Menggaris trees – the Kings of the Forest – and dipping into a series of tiled hot sulphur pools and public baths built by the Japanese during their occupation in WWI. Relax as you

gaze up at giant bamboo trees while soaking up the healing waters.

Where to stay: Poring Hot Spring and Nature Reserve. Located 400 metres above sea level in a lowland forest with large rainforest trees, the property's luxurious Palm Villas are the perfect accommodation for the whole family. Equipped with three bedrooms, basic amenities and fitted with rustic local-made furniture, the villas are situated on a hillside, surrounded by nature.

Hakone Hot Springs, *Japan*

The hot spring town of Hakone has been a local institution for over 50 years with its rustic atmosphere and a friendly, family-style vibe. Hakone's unique geological location lends to its impressive number of different and unique hot springs throughout the area, including onsens in the upper highlands and mountains with milky white waters that are good for one's skin.



Where to Stay: Yama No Chaya features baths filled with water drawn from its own spring on the property. Yama No Chaya takes its name from «mountain teahouse,» a friendly place where people can easily drop in for tea, comfort and outstanding cuisine. Its beautiful mountain location in Hakone is a cool respite from Tokyo's summer heat while, in the fall, it becomes a popular destination for people who love to watch the koyo, the leaves turning their autumn colors.

STB unveils over 60 lifestyle experiences to entice Indian business groups to Singapore

Rewards programme “INSPIRE”, building on success of previous editions in India, will continue presenting Singapore as a competitive MICE destination

The Singapore Tourism Board has launched a new version of the In Singapore Incentives & Rewards (INSPIRE), an incentive programme to attract more visitors from the growing Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) sector.

In partnership with 29 local Singapore businesses, Global INSPIRE offers a selection of over 60 complimentary experiences that qualified MICE groups visiting Singapore can enjoy.

Building on success of previous INSPIRE editions INSPIRE was a collaboration between STB and tourism experience providers in Singapore to develop and showcase specially-customised Singapore experiences to meetings and incentive groups. Through INSPIRE, groups that qualify for support could pre-select tourism experiences to be included in their itineraries, which in turn enabled STB to influence their decisions when choosing destinations. Such experiences included visits to Sentosa, Mount Faber, Gardens by the Bay, Wildlife Reserves Singapore, the Singapore Flyer, as well as unique experiences such as dragon boat team-building.

The new Global INSPIRE incentive programme serves up a wider range of specially designed experiences for MICE groups, catering to small and mid-size groups from all parts of the world. Specially created by passionate experts and mavens in various fields, these experiences are designed to delight and thrill visitors to Singapore. Global INSPIRE offers 63 unique experiences under four broad categories, namely: Singapore’s dining, entertainment and nightlife, thematic tours and learning

experiences, tailored attraction-based experiences and distinctive teambuilding activities.

“India is one of Singapore’s key source markets for MICE groups. The previous INSPIRE programme worked well in India as a marketing tool to convince corporates and travel agents to choose Singapore for their incentive trips. We continue to be creative and keep abreast of the needs of MICE groups in order to stay competitive. The new Global INSPIRE has a diverse selection of group experiences tailored with the MICE visitors’ profile in mind. We are confident that this enhanced program will enable us to further secure a good pipeline of incentive groups from India,” said Mr GB Srithar, STB’s Regional Director for India, Middle East and South Asia. The previous INSPIRE programme, which ran between 2014 and 2018, had supported close to 50 groups from India, involving about 7,000 participants.

India was Singapore’s third largest source market of visitors in 2018. The city-state received 1.4 million visitor arrivals (13% year-on-year growth) from India. India was also Singapore’s top cruise market in 2018, bringing in 160,000 passengers, marking a 27% increase from 2017.

“Responding to the popular demand for incentive trips on-board cruises, the Global INSPIRE programme will benefit groups who have a stayover programme in Singapore before or after their cruising itinerary. This new feature of the INSPIRE programme will help to sharpen our marketing efforts. With the support of our travel trade partners, we seek to reach out to a wider corporate audience and help entice their incentive group travels to Singapore,” added Mr. Srithar.

Examples of experiences and activities supported under the improved INSPIRE

Some specific examples include visitors getting to create bespoke cocktails using herbs and spices found in Singapore, right in the heart of a UNESCO World Heritage site, the Botanic Gardens. Or groups keen on discovering Singapore’s Silicon Valley can get to enjoy an insider’s tour of the One North vicinity, with exclusive fireside sharing sessions by founders and start-ups of successful businesses. And for those visitors who wish to immerse themselves in Singapore’s famed greenery, there is a private after-hours Garden Rhapsody show at Gardens by the Bay, complete with unrivalled city night views from the OCBC Skyway.

Singapore’s BTMICE performance continues to shine

The global launch of INSPIRE comes on the back of a strong performance of BTMICE visitors to Singapore. In 2018, Singapore welcomed over 2.9 million BTMICE visitors, a growth of 12.1 per cent from 2017. Tourism receipts rose 7.2% to reach S\$4.68 billion in 2018, compared to the same period in 2017.

Singapore’s BTMICE landscape continues to grow from strength to strength, with the city state set to host notable events and meetings such as Vidcon Asia, Home Delivery Asia, Deloitte All Hands Meeting and Bentley Systems Year in Infrastructure Conference in 2019. Vidcon is the largest event for the global community of online content creators and will host the inaugural Asia edition of the show in Singapore.

Applications for INSPIRE

MICE groups that are travelling to Singapore between 10 September 2019 and 31 December 2021 can apply for the Global INSPIRE programme. These groups should have a minimum of 20 foreign attendees and stay for at least three days in Singapore. For groups on board cruises, the foreign attendees must stay for at least 2 days. Interested groups should register their interest by 31 March 2021.

Bangkok

tops Mastercard's Global Destination Cities Index for the fourth consecutive year

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has said that the latest Mastercard's Global Destination Cities Index has ranked Bangkok as the No. 1 destination for the fourth consecutive year, with more than 22 million international overnight visitors.

The Thai capital also placed at No. 3 in top cities by Dollars spent while Phuket has been ranked in the 10th place for the second consecutive year.

TAT Governor, Mr. Yuthasak Supasorn, said: "Mastercard's Global Destination Cities Index ranks 200 cities based on proprietary analysis of publicly available visitor volume and

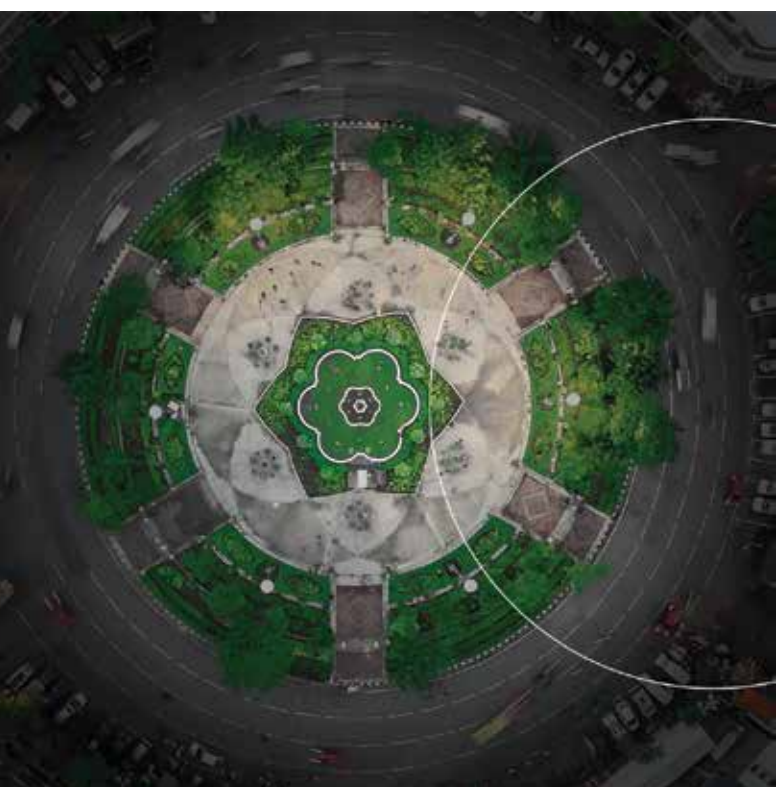
GLOBAL DESTINATION CITIES INDEX 2019

Top 10 Origin Markets

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| 1. USA | 6. Republic of Korea |
| 2. Mainland China | 7. Japan |
| 3. Germany | 8. Canada |
| 4. United Kingdom | 9. Russia |
| 5. France | 10. Taiwan |



For more information, visit
www.newsroom.mastercard.com



The Global Top 10 Destination Cities in 2018

	2018 International Overnight Visitors	Growth Forecast for 2019	Average Length of Stay	Average Spend Per Day (USD)
Bangkok	22.78 million	3.34%	4.8 nights	\$184
Paris	19.10 million	2.24%	2.5 nights	\$296
London	19.09 million	3.47%	5.8 nights	\$148
Dubai	15.93 million	1.68%	3.5 nights	\$553
Singapore	14.67 million	4.0%	4.2 nights	\$272
Kuala Lumpur	13.79 million	9.87%	5.7 nights	\$142
New York	13.60 million	2.94%	7.9 nights	\$152
Istanbul	13.40 million	8.14%	5.8 nights	\$106
Tokyo	12.93 million	10.02%	5.4 nights	\$196
Antalya	12.41 million	8.14%	14.0 nights	\$44

spending data. That Bangkok has been in the No. 1 spot for the fourth year in a row certainly helps strengthen the positive image of the Thai capital as the preferred destination for global travellers."

Marking a decade of insights, the Index also listed Bangkok as being in the top 3 global cities since 2010, as well as being in the No. 1 spot six of the past seven years.

"Now, the four new MRT subway stations in Bangkok's old quarter makes exploring the city's landmark sites even easier. Bangkok's culinary scene has also been strengthened over the years, especially with many restaurants and street food eateries making it into the Michelin Guide. These developments are just a few of the rich history and culture as well as variety of business and leisure experiences Bangkok has to

offer," Mr. Yuthasak added.

The Mastercard Global Destination Cities Index ranks 200 cities based on third-party research and proprietary analysis in terms of the number of their total international overnight visitor arrivals and the cross-border spending by these same visitors in the destination cities in 2018, and gives visitor and expenditure growth forecasts.

Top Cities by Dollars Spent in 2018

	2018 International Overnight Visitor Spend (USD)	Forecast for 2019	Average Spend by Day (USD)
Dubai	\$30.82 billion	4.18%	\$553
Makkah	\$20.09 billion	7.94%	\$135
Bangkok	\$20.03 billion	8.67%	\$184
Singapore	\$16.56 billion	2.66%	\$272
London	\$16.47 billion	4.64%	\$148
New York	\$16.43 billion	2.93%	\$152
Paris	\$14.06 billion	-0.78%	\$296
Tokyo	\$13.77 billion	12.74%	\$196
Palma de Mallorca	\$12.69 billion	3.17%	\$233
Phuket	\$12.01 billion	9.16%	\$247

Demand from travelers for value, personalization and digital solutions continues to mount



Travelport

- Survey of 23,000 people shows travelers want value over cost but often struggle to find it
- More control and transparency required to satisfy thirst for personalization
- Digital solutions increasingly influencing decision making and travel management

Travelers across the world are increasingly prioritizing value over cost, demanding more autonomy over personalization and using digital solutions to research and manage their trips. These are among the findings of Travelport's Global Digital Traveler Research 2019, which surveyed 23,000 people from 20 countries:

Value is more important than cost, but it can be hard to find

- When booking a flight, value is a top priority for over four out of five (86%) travelers today with just one in five (18%) now booking solely

on cost. This trend is apparent across all age groups led by Baby Boomers (91%) who prioritize value marginally more than younger generations.

- To find offers of value, travelers 34nearly always use a combination of travel review sites like TripAdvisor (42%), price comparison sites like Kayak.com (38%), recommendation sites like Kiwi.com (36%) and have conversations with travel consultants (31%).
- But when shopping online, travelers have mounting frustrations when it comes to

knowing which companies they can trust (50%, up 6% on 2018). They are also frustrated by not knowing whether online reviews are genuine (50%) and the time required to find the right option (43%).

Travelers want more control and transparency when it comes to personalization

- Across all age categories, when booking a flight, travelers typically want to personalize their own experience (42%) through add-ons like extra legroom, additional baggage allowance and meal upgrades. One quarter (24%), however, prefer to receive branded offers, such as Flexi and Saver, which provide a basic level of personalization.
- When attempting to personalize their experience, however, a growing number of travelers are getting frustrated by not being able to understand what is included as standard (52%, up 12% on 2018) and not knowing what add-ons are available to them (56%).
- Travelers are also increasingly frustrated by companies they regularly use not remembering their preferences (35%, up 4% on 2018). Frustration with this is most prevalent among Gen Y (39%).

A wide range of technologies are now influencing decision making

- Nearly three quarters (71%) of travelers today consider it important whether an airline offers a good digital experience when booking a flight, up +3% on 2018. Over half (58%) also consider this when choosing accommodation, up +7% on 2018.
- When researching a trip, three quarters (77%) of travelers have reviewed videos and photos posted by travel brands on social media,

up 2% on 2018. One third (36%) of Gen Y travelers today 35nearly always do this in the research phase. Facebook is considered the most influential social media platform by all age groups except for Gen Z, which puts Instagram marginally ahead.

- Nearly half of all travelers (48%) now believe augmented or virtual reality experiences would help them better plan their trips. Demand is greatest among Gen Y (61%) travelers, though still significant among all other age categories.

Demand continues to rise for technologies that make travel easier to manage

- Nearly half (45%) of travelers today get frustrated when they are unable to access their booking information round-the-clock on mobile devices, such as

smartphones and smartwatches, up 9% on 2018. When it comes to age groups, frustration is particularly high among Gen Y (50%) and Gen Z (47%) travelers but also maintained among others.

- Nearly half (44%) of travelers have now used voice search to help manage travel, with use greatest among Gen Y travelers (61%) and lowest among Baby Boomers (12%). One quarter (25%) of Gen Y travelers today 35nearly always use the technology for this use. When the technology is used by travelers, some of the most popular requests made are for information relating to the weather at their destinations (60%) and getting live traffic updates (54%).
- Technology, however, is not always the answer. Two fifths (42%) of travelers, for example, find not being able to speak to a human frustrating, up from 38% in 2018.

This view was shared consistently across all age groups, though highest among Baby Boomers (43%).

Commenting on the findings of the research, Travelport's Chief Customer and Marketing Officer, Fiona Shanley said: "Travelers are consumers too and they want an experience from travel providers and travel agents that is as simple and engaging as the best retailers. Travelport's latest global research shows that technology is key to this– from serving relevant and personalized offers to providing attractive propositions from trusted sources. With increasing adoption of emerging technologies and use of new industry standards, this is precisely where the industry is heading. At Travelport, we will continue to accelerate developments in all these areas, and more, to help the industry keep pace with the rapidly evolving needs of the modern traveler."

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TCEB's India Road Show

secures leads of 8,000 meeting and incentive delegates to Thailand



The Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) is reporting positive results from its recent India Road Show that substantiated sales leads with a potential of 3,500 meeting and incentive delegates from New Delhi and 4,500 delegates from Mumbai for events to be held in the Kingdom in the next couple of months.

Ms. Nooch Homrossukhon, TCEB's Director of Meetings and Incentives Department, said the road show was staged in July with the aim of strengthening Thailand's existing meetings and incentives business from India and at the same time generating new opportunity.

"In line with TCEB's role - under its "Thailand Redefine Your Business Events" branding - as a co-creator of business opportunities in generating promising sales leads for the Thai MICE sector, the India Road Show yielded productive results," said Ms. Nooch.

The activity involved corporate networking events and media meet up sessions in New Delhi and Mumbai, and was led by Ms. Nooch, along with Mr. Nitin Sachdeva, TCEB's Representative in India.

The events in New Delhi and Mumbai attracted significant interest within India's outbound meetings and incentives market, providing a positive indication of Thailand's continued status as a leading MICE destination in Asia, Ms. Nooch added.

In New Delhi, TCEB's corporate networking event was attended by 48 corporate delegates, while the media meet up session saw nine media companies participating. The Mumbai event was attended by 55 corporate delegates, and the media meet up session drew five media companies.

A major component of TCEB's marketing activity in the Indian market involves the "Meet by Design - Redefined" support campaign, comprising three packages with a tailored menu of privileges and subsidies for event groups coming to Thailand.

'Meet NOW' is for meeting and incentive groups starting from 100 delegates and offers a choice of exclusive in-kind services, including a Thai welcome gift for all delegates; VIP fast-track immigration at Suvarnabhumi Airport or a cultural performance. For groups of over 500 delegates, a financial subsidy is also included. 'Meet SMART' is for corporate meeting groups of 100 from the 10 targeted industries under the Thailand 4.0 policy, while 'Meet MEGA' is aimed at larger groups of over 3,000 delegates.

"The India Road Show also gathered vital feedback on the requirements and wishes of the Indian meetings and incentives market toward Thailand. Key factors are the demand for new and competitively priced product, and added value private sector offerings such as discount vouchers, Ms. Nooch concluded.

Breitling

before being released in the wider market and across the globe.

The Breitling Aviator 8 Etihad Limited Edition – building on an aviation heritage

Among Willy Breitling's many celebrated achievements was the establishment of the Huit Aviation Department in 1938. He was aware of the strict requirements for military and civil aviation, and the department's name – the French word for "eight" – was chosen to recall the eight days of power reserve offered by onboard clocks and other dashboard instruments.

The Huit Aviation Department was also responsible for the development of Breitling's wrist chronographs for aviation use. The timing of the foundation of the Huit Aviation Department was fortuitous: its products immediately attracted the attention of military aviators, and as the Second World War approached, the Department received a large order from the Royal Air Force for onboard chronographs destined for its legendary fighter planes.

The Navitimer 8 collection honours Willy Breitling and his Huit Aviation Department. Breitling's Aviator 8 Etihad Limited Edition continues the company's proud pilots' watch heritage and is a stunning celebration of Breitling's partnership with Etihad Airways.

Breitling

Since 1884, Breitling has established a global reputation for high-precision timepieces, its pioneering role in the development of the wrist chronograph, and its uncompromising commitment to design excellence. With the brand's storied association with aviation, Breitling has shared the finest moments in humankind's conquest of the skies. Renowned for its spirit of innovation, it has also earned a place of privilege in the worlds of science, sport, and technology. Breitling manufactures its own movements in-house and the quality of every watch is confirmed by its status as a COSC-certified chronometer, made in Switzerland.



Announces Partnership with Etihad Airways

Breitling is announcing a new

partnership with Etihad Airways, the national airline of the United Arab Emirates. With an equal passion for aviation, quality and precision, Etihad offers a perfect platform for Breitling, who will serve as the Official Timekeeper.

To celebrate the partnership, Breitling has introduced the Aviator 8 Etihad Limited Edition in black steel. The model, which has been co-designed with Etihad Airways is limited to 500 pieces and complete with numbers in the Arabic language.

Speaking at the launch event, Tim Sayler, Breitling's CMO, said, "Etihad Airways and Breitling are united by a passion for aviation, as well as by their steadfast commitment to quality and precision."

Robin Kamark, Chief Commercial Officer, Etihad Aviation Group, said: "As one of the world's most innovative and punctual airlines, we are proud to mark the launch of this great partnership between two leading brands who are world renowned for style, quality and precision. To mark our collaboration

with Breitling as Etihad's Official Timekeeper, we have introduced the Aviator 8 Etihad Limited Edition, reflecting our Arabian heritage, age-old traditions and focus on the future. We are confident it will be popular among customers and watch collectors."

Aviator 8 Etihad Limited Edition

The Aviator 8 Etihad Limited Edition prominently displays the day of the week and the date along with the time. The day of the week is indicated at the 12 o'clock position while the date is ideally placed at 6 o'clock. Powered by the Breitling Calibre 45, this automatic wristwatch has a bidirectional rotor winding with over 38 hours of power reserve.

The black dial is revealed through a double anti-reflective sapphire glass. The 41 mm DLC-coated stainless steel case has a solid screwed back and is presented on a black leather strap. The model features Arabic language numbers in a striking gold colour with matching gold hands.

The Aviator 8 Etihad Limited Edition is a COSC-certified chronometer and produced in a series limited to 500 pieces. The model will be exclusively available in Etihad's home of Abu Dhabi



Bangkok and Hua Hin shine for “redefined” MICE of Thailand

TCEB's annual international media familiarisation trip showcases Thailand's consistent new product development that redefines business experiences for MICE travellers

Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau's (TCEB) annual international media familiarisation trip 2019 is showcasing the new strength of Bangkok's and Hua Hin's dual destination dynamism as product development continues to create new attractions and activities at a community level.

Mrs. Nichapa Yoswee, TCEB's team members and media representatives during this year annual international media familiarisation trip.

TCEB's Senior Vice President - Business Mrs. Nichapa Yoswee said: "TCEB is using this to help redefine business experiences for MICE travellers in both destinations. The brand-new attraction at ICONSIAM, the new venue - True ICONSIAM Hall, together with the latest exclusive Michelin starred culinary experiences, are helping to strengthen international MICE business in Thailand. While innovative attractions and activities in local communities, like coconut palm sugar production in Samut Songkram, salt spa in Phetchaburi, both in the vicinity of Hua Hin, and herbal products in Hua Hin, present redefined business opportunities and experiences often not previously available."

This redefined idea of TCEB comes amidst the stronger role of MICE in Thailand's national development. MICE is now incorporated as a new growth driving engine in the government's 20-year national development plan, plus the recent government policy to promote more local and community attractions beyond the established destinations.

"The positive development in Thailand's MICE policy is reflected in

TCEB's record performance in the 2019 financial year. TCEB has won bids for 11 international conferences while attracted 17 new trade shows and 12 mega-sized meeting and incentive groups of over 100,000 delegates," Mrs. Nichapa said.

This year also sees Thailand hosting two global MICE events: the UIA Asia Pacific Round Table 2019 scheduled for 19 to 20 September in Pattaya and the 86th UFI Global Congress 2019 scheduled for 6 to 9 November in Bangkok.

In 2020, TCEB will continue to focus on key markets around Southeast Asia, Europe, USA, China and India supported by new development of MICE infrastructure and products. This includes increased function space of new venue hotel opening and expanded and upgraded transportation options in Bangkok and nationwide. The development is in conjunction with TCEB's '7 MICE Magnificent Themes', BizConnect Application and the Online Request for Support (RFS) among many other initiatives to promote new ideas for MICE and tools to facilitate events located in Thailand.

"Another key direction of TCEB in 2020 is deepening private-public sector partnership and collaboration, such as the Thailand Incentive and Convention Association (TICA), Thai Exhibition Association (TEA) and Thai Hotels Association (THA), to find creative MICE solutions and new MICE experiences for clients hosting events in Thailand, which we believe will enhance redefined business experiences of our clients" Mrs. Nichapa concluded.

TCEB president Mr. Chiruit Isarangkun Na Ayuthaya (front row, centre) also joined the international media representatives in one of the many activities during the four-day familiarisation trip. Facts & Figures So far in 2019, Thailand's MICE sector continues to display vibrancy as it moves from strength to strength. Overall overseas visitor arrivals and revenue (Q1 to Q3 2019) recorded 967,828 travellers (up 6.25% over same period in 2018) and revenue of 70,438 million baht (approximately US\$ 2.3 billion, up 2.23% over the same period last year).

By sector, MICE arrivals to Thailand showed amazing resiliency across the board. Meetings accounted for a total of 249,371 travellers (+4.44% over 2018) and revenue of 22,022 million baht (+6.53%); Incentives totalled 274,093 travellers (+3.28%) with revenue of 15,255 million baht (+0.15%); Conferences totalled 228,592 travellers (-3.05%) on revenue of 17,902 million baht (-3.48%); Exhibitions totalled 215,772 travellers (+20.02%) with total revenue of 15,259 million baht (+5.63%)

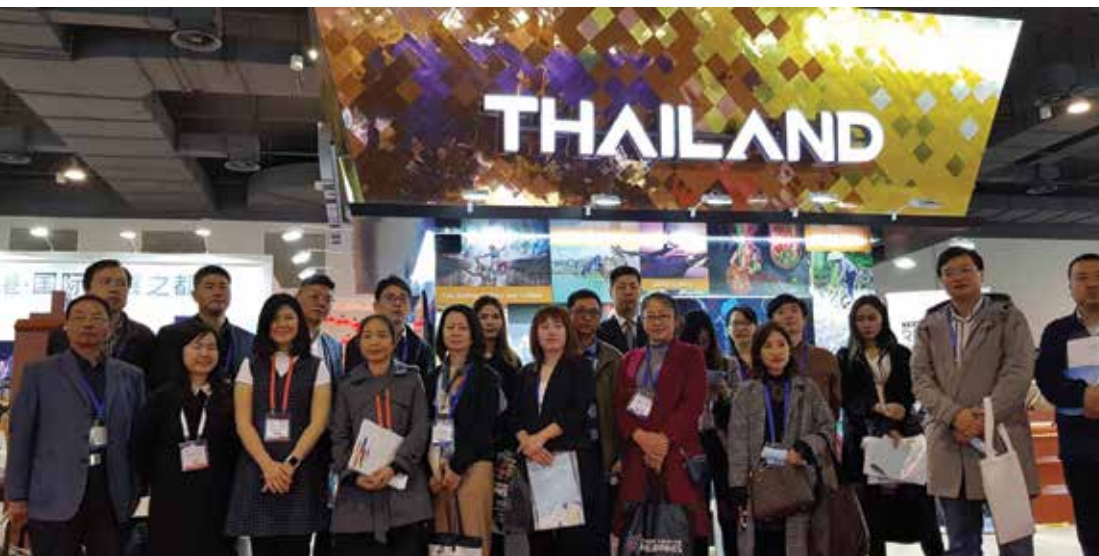
Asia is the top source market by geographical region with 852,640 arrivals to Thailand, followed by Europe with 41,357 arrivals, Oceania with 35,571 arrivals and the Americans with 24,834 arrivals. After that the Middle East and Africa came in with 7,655 and 5,771 arrivals respectively.

In 2020, the number of overseas MICE visitors to Thailand is expected to increase by 11% to 1,386,000 arrivals and revenue by 5% to 105,600 million baht.

TCEB's



'Thailand Redefine Your Business Events' fuels incentive growth from China



Thailand's popularity as preferred destination for Chinese companies poised to continue in 2020

For the highly coveted 'Mega' styled incentive segment of 1,000 delegates or more Thailand welcomed 37 groups from the total 70. This represented 99,967 delegates who generated revenue of 7.2 billion Baht. This achievement, in part, can be attributed to TCEB's "Meet Mega" campaign that offers financial rewards for mega-size groups.

Origins of Chinese groups are nationwide with the majority coming from Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen respectively, or from other major urban centres where large Chinese companies have offices. Top destinations for Chinese incentive groups in Thailand include Bangkok and Pattaya.

"Thailand's strength in attracting Chinese incentives includes visa-on-arrival fee waiver scheme (available until 1 October 2019), modern MICE infrastructure, convenience of access, famous Thai hospitality and culture, renowned Thai cuisine and the incredible value for money," Mrs. Nichapa said.

The Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) continues to fuel incentive growth from China as its innovative 'Thailand Redefine Your Business Events' branding helps build for an even better performance before the 2019 fiscal year comes to a close in September, with the momentum expected to continue through to next year.

Mrs. Nichapa Yoswee, TCEB's Senior Vice President - Business, said: "TCEB's achievement thus far and plans for the coming years strengthen Thailand's popularity as a preferred

destination for incentive groups from China. This reflects TCEB's role under our "Thailand Redefine Your Business Events" branding that helped drive this outstanding performance. More campaigns will be considered for incentives market during the next fiscal year 2020."

Thailand has been selected as the host country for over 70 incentive groups from China during October 2018 – July 2019. This represents a total of 169,215 delegates who had an average expenditure of 72,297 Baht per trip that generated a total of 12.23 billion Baht in revenue for the Thai economy.

ITE Hong K

combining the
34th ITE Leisure &
the 15th ITE MICE

*Travel Fair cover
premium travels
in Asia's top
markets*



Hong Kong 2020

First held over 30 years ago, ITE's buyers, regional trade, MICE and quality FIT visitors come mainly from Hong Kong, Asia's 3rd largest by outbound spending, and (mainland) China, World's and Asia's largest! Truly international, 87% of ITE's exhibitors are from outside the city and over 50% of its participating countries and regions from outside Asia!

MARKET

With 2018 outbound spending of US\$26.5 billion, Hong Kong also ranked world's 11th largest, but its per capita outbound spending at around US\$3500 is higher than top global markets like USA at around US\$440 and Germany at around US\$1134 (TABLE A) ! The Greater Bay Area (the Bay), which includes cities like Hong Kong, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Macau and several other major cities of Guangdong, has a combined GDP of US\$1.69 trillion and a population of 68 million. Mainland cities of the Bay contributed 17.5% of ITE's visitors in two trade days.

The only travel fair in Hong Kong, ITE covers leisure, MICE and highlight theme travels. It has separate days for travel trade and MICE, and public visitors, with different media partners, admission policy and promotions etc. In fact, ITE offers B2B, B2MICE and B2C programs.

The annual ITE Hong Kong is organized by TKS and supported by, for examples, China's Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Hong Kong Tourism Board, Macau Government Tourist Office, Travel Industry Council Hong Kong, and MICE associations etc.

Regional Trade Visitors & Quality FIT

Attending ITE 2019's trade days, which require registration for admission, are 11613 regional buyers and visitors respectively from Hong Kong (63%), mainland China (26%) and other parts of Asia (11%). By sector, over 50% from travel agent / operator and 18.8% from MICE and corporations.

Of ITE's 73665 public visitors, 85% prefer traveling in FIT / Private Tour! More importantly, they are educated (44% university and another 23% postsecondary), and take multiple outbound holidays (60% Three or more in past year but only 0.2% None)! All reflect well on their quality as target customers.

Thus, ITE exhibitors not only can conduct channel sale, but meet also quality travelers who play increasing role in deciding on routes, destination and budget allocation.

ITE MICE – the only MICE show in Hong Kong & southern China

In ITE 2019 were nearly 2200 MICE / Corporate visitors while 141 exhibitors present related travel products; and 8 MICE seminar and a Forum hosted jointly by the International Live Event Association (ILEA) Hong Kong Chapter and the MIX magazine etc.

Survey found 51.6% of all MICE and corporate visitor interest in holding incentive tour while 33.2% in holding business meeting abroad. Significantly, 41% of travel trade visitor interest in both MICE and leisure travel which perhaps a reflection of synergy!

ILEA Hong Kong and MIX Magazine hosted a MICE Forum, while the Hong

Kong Exhibition and Convention Industry Association (HKECIA), which and other chambers of commerce and professional bodies help promoting and/or inviting their members, a supporter.

International Exhibitors Presenting Trendy Theme Travels

Though there is an official Hong Kong pavilion, only 12.5% of ITE'S 675 exhibitors came from the city! Among the 56 participating countries and regions, 39% from Asia, 29% from Europe, 18% from Americas and Oceania, and 14% from the Middle East and Africa.

Visitors will often be talking directly to service providers from different destinations! A pioneer in Asia, ITE promotes In-depth / Theme Travel which are popular with Luxury Tour, MICE, Private Tour & FIT (TABLE B), or in short travel products for various well off travelers in ITE! These make ITE attractive to buyers, regional trade visitors, MICE and quality FIT travelers.

China and Japan Pavilions, respectively with over 100 and some 80 stands, are the largest and the second largest Japan pavilion! Not counting those provincial pavilions "nested" within a large pavilion at national level, there were over 30 official pavilions / stands from Asia, Europe and Africa etc.

Co-exhibitors presenting products on leisure, MICE and theme travels can often be found in the same pavilion. Some highlight various travel themes ranging from Sport, Green, culture, Cruise to Gourmet etc., while several

others bring cultural teams performing in grand stage inside the exhibition halls.

Quality FIT visitors in ITE - Plenty & Accessible

English speaking and Hong Kong SAR passport holders can visa-free to visit over 150 countries / regions. FIT is popular in Hong Kong. By gathering tenths of thousand quality FIT, public days of ITE a cost effective platform for direct promotions or even sale to travellers.

Highly educated and take multiple holidays, 66.9% of FIT / public visitors interest in sourcing / booking holiday and 62.4% in attending travel seminar in ITE. Also, 55% interest in joining "local" tour after arriving at the destination. Tech savvy, 61.3% of them do book online directly with suppliers which is higher than the percentage of 51.6% booking with OTA.

B2B, B2MICE & B2C Programs Available

In addition to having separate Trade and Public Days, ITE features some 20 seminars for travel trade, 8 for MICE and around 100 for public / FIT. Many of the MICE seminars held in the second Trade Day which is designated as MICE / Corporate Travel Day.

ITE's B2B program includes, for examples, Business Matching for Buyers quick-dating with Sellers; pre-show promotion of exhibitor's Trade Seminar or Workshop by e-newsletter and on website for online pre-registration; Free e-promotions on website, face book and we-chat; sponsorship and online and onsite advertising etc. In fact, exhibitors can rent and hold their function conveniently in purpose-built seminar rooms inside exhibition halls.

Totaling nearly 100 with each lasting for around 30 minutes, travel seminars

in ITE's public days are highly well attended! Held inside the exhibition halls, popular seminar can draw well over 100 audiences, who often line up by themselves without supervision outside seminar room waiting for the next seminar!

Exhibitor interest in holding public travel seminar shall apply to the organizer, who will make selection so as to uphold quality. ITE's B2C program also include Free time slot for cultural performances in grand stage inside exhibition halls; sponsoring prizes for grand lucky draw; and onsite advertising etc.

ITE Hong Kong 2020, which combines the 34th ITE Leisure and the 15th ITE MICE, will be held from June 11 to 14 at Halls 1A to 1E of the Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre, with the first two days for trade and professionals only, and the last two days open to public.

Table A – International Tourism Expenditure

MARKET	2018 Expenditure (USD Billion)	World Rank	Asia Rank	Population (Million)	Expenditure (USD per Capita)
China	277.3	1	1	1430	193.9
USA	144.2	2	-	327	441.0
Germany	94.2	3	-	83.1	1133.6
S. Korea	32.0	9	2	51.2	625
Hong Kong (China)	26.5	11	3	7.4	3581.1

Source: UNWTO World Tourism Barometer May 2019

Table B – Theme Travel by Exhibitors, Trade & Public Visitors

No of Exhibitors#	INTERESTED THEMES/EXPERIENCE (Listed by Alphabetical order)	Trade	Public
120	Art & Entertainment	34.8%	n/a
138	Carnival / Festival / Special Events	34.9%	n/a
118	Driving Tour	25.7%	31.0%
223	Family Holidays	38.9%	16.8%
177	Gourmet Tour	39.1%	57.1%
157	Green/ Eco-Tourism	32.3%	33.6%
204	In-depth, culture & history	34.9%	50.8%
129	Sport Tourism	21.7%	23.7%
132	Study Tour	29.9%	8.7%
147	Travel Photography	26.2%	35.0%

Top Ten

n/a – not applied to public

Hilton Mumbai International Airport Appoints Vipul Mishra as Commercial Director

Mumbai, 18th September, 2019: Hilton Mumbai International Airport announced the appointment of Vipul Mishra as their Commercial Director. Vipul comes with an outstanding experience of 14 years working with varied hotels in India and abroad.

In the Commercial Director role at Hilton Mumbai International Airport, Vipul will be responsible to help the brand to maintain a trajectory of growth for the hotel and oversee the development of talents in Sales and Marketing. His immense knowledge about the markets will help Hilton Mumbai International Airport to strategize better against our

competition hotels.

Prior to joining Hilton Mumbai International Airport, he has worked with many well-known chains like, Hyatt, IHG, and Jumeirah.

Ravi Rai, General Manager, Hilton Mumbai International Airport said, "We are delighted to have Vipul grow within the company from his earlier role of Director of Sales. He has been associated with the company since many years, and under his leadership our hotel has been constantly making progress in achieving great revenue and market share. I firmly believe his immense experience and knowledge will further strengthen our business and marketing reach."



Vipul is an alumni of Mumbai University, having a graduate degree in Hotel Management. He likes spending his leisure time travelling to new travel destinations and staying fit with his passion for swimming.



Ms. Simmi Satyeash Pai named Vice President of Sales and Director of Sales & Marketing

OZEN by Atmosphere, Maldives Appoints New Vice President of Sales and Director of Sales & Marketing

OZEN by Atmosphere, Maldives announced the appointment of **Simmi Satyeash Pai named Vice President of Sales and Director of Sales & Marketing**. She brings more than 14 years of experience within the destination in Sales and Marketing. In her new role, she will be responsible

for all sales efforts for the group, with a focus on pushing Sales and Marketing activities for OZEN by Atmosphere to a broader level in the global luxury travel market. Prior to joining Atmosphere Hotels & Resorts, she was the Director of Sales & Marketing of Fairmont Maldives at Sirru Fen Fushi.

India's first **premium cruise** ship **Karnika**

returns to Mumbai
for new and maiden
cruise destinations -
Ganpatipule and Diu



- *Karnika to offer homecoming discount of 15 per cent for Diwali, Christmas and New Year vacations*
- *Karnika offers dedicated Jain food cuisine*
- *Special cabins and facilities for senior citizens and differently abled passengers*

Karnika, India's first premium cruise ship by Jalesh Cruises is arriving back in Mumbai on September 19 to sail to new and unexplored Indian cruise destinations -Ganpatipule in Maharashtra and Diu. Jalesh Cruises, India's first multi-destination cruise line is celebrating the homecoming of the ship with a 15 per cent discount to guests for Diwali, Christmas and New Year vacations.

The 70, 285 ton, 14 deck white beauty will take to the blue Indian waters from September 20 with its first itinerary to Goa. Karnika will

become the first domestic cruise ship to take guests to Ganpatipule in Maharashtra in October and Diu in November.

Jurgen Bailom, President & CEO, Jalesh Cruises said, "We are extremely excited to offer new and unexplored cruise destinations to our guests in India. Being India's first premium cruise line, we are focused on offering our guests the best of the country's vast coastline. Karnika will be the first domestic ship to sail to Ganpatipule in Maharashtra and Diu, thereby opening up new cruising

frontiers in India for our guests to enjoy and for others to follow.”

Karnika will be sailing from Mumbai to Muscat, Oman for a Diwali and Christmas special itineraries and it will sail from Dubai to Mumbai for the New Year trip.

Karnika has received an overwhelming response from its 15 sailings earlier this year in Mumbai and during its four-month sail in the Middle East.

Karnika undertook its maiden sail from Mumbai to Goa on April 17. In keeping with the maritime tradition, Karnika, meaning a ‘celestial nymph’ was transferred to the water in a gala ceremony held earlier this year on April 19.

On board the ship, passengers have a variety of cuisines, entertainment, adventure and relaxation to choose from. Additionally, the cruise offers land based excursions at different ports for passengers.

Features of Karnika

The ship has three fine dining restaurants, which includes Indian cuisine at Waterfront and Chef’s Table and Thai, Malay, Korean, Mongolian,

Taiwanese and Japanese cuisines at Chopstix. The ship also hosts nine different buffet and food stations offering a variety of delicacies ranging from street food, barbeque, international grill to patisserie and frozen desserts. Karnika has a dedicated cuisine for Jain passengers.

There are nine bars on board the ship to offer a full range of bar menu and international premium spirits.

Karnika provides a host of on board entertainment for children as well as adults. The ship will offer Broadway shows, Burlesque performances, casino, music and dance nights, movie screenings and adventure activities among others.

The ship offers features that make it convenient and easy for senior citizens and differently abled passengers to enjoy the cruise.

Karnika is also the first Indian ship to provide therapeutic relaxation facilities on the high seas. The on board Spa offers a host of aromatic and natural techniques for relaxation. A state-of-the-art fitness studio and

multi-purpose salon facilities are also available to passengers.

Karnika is also equipped with state-of-the-art venue, modern technology and 24x7 Wi-Fi access, which coupled with exotic cuisine and international hospitality will offer the best corporate parties, off-sites as well as family celebrations.

Jalesh Cruises has initiated bookings for its 2019 itineraries on its website www.jaleshcruises.com or directly through its holiday advisors at 1800 266 8927 in addition to its Sales Business Partners.

Jalesh Cruises is the owner and operator of India’s premiere cruise liner – Karnika, which commenced operations from April 17th in Mumbai. Jalesh Cruises, an Essel Group venture, is India’s first multi-destination cruise line that has world class entertainment shows, activities and exotic authentic cuisines packed with international hospitality on the high sea. The cruise is designed & customized especially for the Indian audience and also for the foreigners visiting India to experience the flavor of Indian culture, food & hospitality.

HOSPITALITY AND FOOD

ITC to add 3000 rooms under Welcom brand in 5 years

The new WelcomHotel properties will come up in places like Corbett, Chennai, Chail, Ahmedabad and Puri. Under the WelcomHotel brand, the company currently has 14 hotels with 1,700 rooms, including both owned and managed.

ITC Hotels will launch 3,000 rooms under its WelcomHotel brand in the next five years through new management contracts, chief executive Dipak Haksar said.

The new WelcomHotel properties will come up in places like Corbett, Chennai, Chail, Ahmedabad and Puri. Under the WelcomHotel brand, the company currently has 14 hotels with 1,700 rooms, including both owned and managed.

“This year we will be opening almost 1,000 rooms. New sign-ups also include Amritsar, Bhubaneshwar, Guntur and Coorg,” Haksar said.

In June this year, the ITC group company had announced the launch of ITC Royal Bengal, its new super-premium luxury hotel in Kolkata.

ITC chairman Sanjiv Puri had said the current proportion between the company’s managed and owned properties was 50:50 and that going

forward it would be 60:40. Puri said that the company was restructuring its WelcomHotel brand to make it more contemporary.

ITC’s WelcomHotels are currently located in Delhi, Jodhpur, Srinagar and Bengaluru. ITC Hotels has more than 100 hotels in over 70 destinations in India.

The chain’s four brands are: ITC Hotel in the luxury category, WelcomHotel in the five-star segment, Fortune in the mid-market to upscale space and WelcomHeritage in the heritage-leisure segment.

The ITC group reported 5.7% growth in revenue from operations at Rs 11,502.82 crore for the quarter to June.



Sobit Sarovar Portico, Palolem, Goa

Now Open

Escape into a magical world of azure blues and quaint architecture with Sobit Sarovar Portico. It is the latest player in the Goan market that promises a tranquil escape from the buzz of the city down by Palolem beach.

The property, launched by Mr. Amit Prabhu, Owner of Prabhu Realtors, and Ajay Bakaya, Managing Director, Sarovar Hotels & Resorts, is one of 78 hotels across India and Africa managed by Sarovar Hotels and Resorts. The

Discover The Beauty of South Goa in Luxury At Sobit Sarovar Portico



hotel designing is done by architect Mr. Kundan Prabhu, with interiors by Mr. Rohan Timple and Mr. Sameer Reddies, and landscapes by architect Ms. Abha Sapre.

Located just 500 metres away from one of South Goa's most well-loved and stunning beaches, Sobit Sarovar Portico aims to promote tourism in the area and offer high-quality service and stay options.

Spread across 5500 square metres, Sobit Sarovar Portico has 48 well-appointed deluxe rooms encased beautifully by quaint architecture that reflects Goa's history and culture. Intricate woodwork, hand-selected art and sleek lines showcase a blend of Goan and Indo-Portuguese styles.

Throughout the hotel, paintings by Pravin Solanke and other art narrate the tale of Goa's heritage, culture, landscapes, events and daily life. As the ideal destination for leisure and business travellers, Palolem offers romantic escapes, surreal villages and an enlivened air of magic and mystery through the year.

The myriad food and beverage outlets set themselves apart within the hotel, each offering a different atmosphere – the creations of Baaya Design - without losing that singular common thread of true Goan hospitality and quaint architectural style. Uzo, the bar, is well-stocked with a large array of international beverages styled in a chic, friendly manner. Flavours is Sobit Sarovar Portico's multi-cuisine restaurant with popular dishes from around the world, served with flair. At Balcão, guests can lounge by the pool as they sip innovative cocktails and nibble on delicious snacks.

With its gorgeous interiors, Sala de Cristal banquet hall offers the ideal venue for events of any sort, from weddings to private parties, exhibitions to corporate retreats for up to 350 guests. To reinforce that feeling of relaxation, Sobit Sarovar Portico offers O Spa, at which trained therapists ease and relax guests with a wide variety of treatments. In addition, the resort has a well-equipped gym, activity center

for children and adults, and complimentary Wi-Fi.

Managing Director of Sarovar Hotels & Resorts **Mr. Ajay Bakaya** said, "We are delighted to expand our presence in the market which is a very popular tourist destination. We believe the hotel's location clubbed with Sarovar's signature hospitality will deliver a notable experience to its business and leisure guests alike."

As part of its launch promotion, Sobit Sarovar

Portico is offering special promotions on room tariffs and 20 per cent discount on food and beverage.

Sarovar Hotels & Resorts is a leading hotel management company and one of the fastest-growing chains of hotels in India. Headed by a team of industry veterans, the Company manages 80 operational hotels in 50 destinations in India and overseas, under Sarovar Premiere, Sarovar Portico, Hometel brands. The brands cover the 3, 4 and 5 star spectrum. Sarovar Hotels also operates Corporate Hospitality Services division with the management of services at various prestigious Business Schools. With 12 regional sales & reservations offices located across India, Sarovar Hotels & Resorts is one of the largest and most diverse hotel management companies in the country today.

Sarovar Hotels is part of the Paris-headquartered Louvre Hotels Group, a major player in the global hospitality industry, with a portfolio that now includes 2,500 hotels in 52 countries. It has a full hotel offering, spanning 1 star to 5 stars, with the Louvre Hotels Group's historic brands (Golden Tulip, Royal Tulip, Tulip Inn, Première Classe, Kyriad, Campanile), the 5 brands of the Sarovar network in India, Louvre Hotels Group is a subsidiary of Jin Jiang International Holdings Co., Ltd., the second largest hospitality group in the world.



The Fern

An Ecotel Hotel Opens in Lonavla, Maharashtra

The Fern Hotels & Resorts, India's leading environmentally sensitive hotel chain has opened The Fern - An Ecotel Hotel, an upscale hotel amidst sylvan surroundings, in the picturesque hill town of Lonavla, 90 kilometres off Mumbai. This is the second property which the company has started managing in Lonavla. Earlier this year, Viola Beacon Resort started its operations. This takes the tally to 18 hotels managed by the company in Maharashtra. Overall the company is managing 66 hotels.

Commenting on the opening, Mr Suhail Kannampilly, CEO, Concept Hospitality Pvt Ltd, said, "We are very

happy to announce the opening of an ecotel in the Western Ghats, an area which has been declared as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We will ensure sustainable hospitality without harming the environment in this rich bio-diverse area."

The Fern, Lonavla an 80-room hotel spread over 2 acres offers quintessential hill charm. Brushing the back walls of the Valvan Dam off the Expressway the hotel provides contemporary accommodations, a coffee shop, a finely designed multi-cuisine restobar, state-of-art banquet halls, a swimming pool and poolside lawns. The hotel is close to the

Lonavala market, with easy access to the major sightseeing attractions in and around the vicinity.

The guests have the choice of staying in four different categories of rooms' viz. Winter Green, Fern Club, Hazel Suite and Fern Club Suite. The hotel has a Presidential Suite as well. All the rooms are equipped with all modern facilities. Some of the amenities in the room include packaged drinking water, eco-friendly light arrangement and bathroom conveniences, tea maker, satellite TV connections etc.

Various dining avenues are available to the guests. Glass House Cafe is a contemporary all-day dining multi cuisine restaurant. Leaf and Stalk, a trendy resto-bar offers a tantalizing menu and is open between 12 noon to midnight. Twilight Lounge, as the name suggests is a lounge bar. Grab a seat in the early evening at Twilight Lounge to enjoy spicy margaritas made with fresh jalapeño - an ideal antidote at the end of a long day. Open daily 6 pm to midnight.

LOCATION: The hotel is 0.1 kms from the Mumbai-Pune Expressway Exit, 3 kms from Lonavala Railway Station, 70 kms from Pune International Airport and 90 kms from Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport.

Cygnett Hotels & Resorts



open its latest property in Jodhpur

Branded as Cygnett Style Mantra, it is Cygnett's 6th property to have opened this year

Cygnett Hotels has launched Cygnett Style Mantra in Jodhpur, the second largest city in Rajasthan also known as the **"Gateway to Thar"** and is famous for mighty Mehrangarh Fort, its blue houses, temples, sweets and snacks. This is group's sixth property to have opened this year.

Strategically located at the city centre and at a 20 minutes' drive from the Mehrangarh Fort, Cygnett Style Mantra is a newly built property which is just 6km from the railway station and 8km from the city airport. Speaking about the new property in Cygnett's bouquet of offerings, **Sarbendra Sarkar, Managing Director of the Cygnett Group**, said, "Cygnett's latest addition in Cygnett Style Mantra promises to offer stay experience that one would associate with quality experience. In the second-largest city of Rajasthan, the hotel is perfectly suited for both leisure and

business travellers, owing to its proximity to city centre and business houses."

Cygnett Style Mantra offers several stylish and elegant rooms, dressed in vibrant colours designed for blissful relaxing stay in Jodhpur. The rooms are divided into club rooms, superior rooms and suite rooms. The rooms have been arranged tastefully, offering high speed wi-fi connection, telephone with global dialing, LED screen with DTH services, mini bar and all other premium modern amenities. In addition, the hotel guests can enjoy a multi cuisine restaurant named Cygnett Pavilion with authentic recipes.

Cygnett Style Mantra offers several stylish and elegant rooms, dressed in vibrant colours designed for blissful relaxing stay in Jodhpur.

The restaurant has gone for eclectically selected local dishes that would bring forth the authenticity of the cuisine of the state in more ways than one.

Cygnett Hotels & Resorts started in 2012 in India with the vision of creating a hotel company that is responsive to the demands of a metamorphosing world, without compromising the ideals of good hospitality, quality comfort and great service. Cygnett's constant endeavor for success and commitment towards excellence is continually recognized in India & globally. The hospitality group is actively working to open 100+ Hotels across 75+ cities in India and to operate in 6+ International locations within the next five years. The company is looking forward to adding 6000+ keys by 2022 and to benchmark "Cygnett Service & Experiences" in the industry. Currently the group has over 35 alliances with 20 operational hotels and 15 hotels in pipeline and various stages of pre-opening. Soon, Cygnett will be marking its flag in the South Asian countries.

TravelBullz (TBZ) celebrated its 9th year anniversary in Thailand

Online B2B Destination Management Company TravelBullz celebrated their 9th anniversary with great pomp and show in Thailand recently. All the employees of the organization from Hong Kong, Thailand and India travelled for 5-day celebrations in Pattaya and Bangkok.

A guest list of over 300 including many stalwarts from the travel and hospitality industry joined all employees from TravelBullz offices in Hong Kong, Thailand and India for the Gala Awards Night and cocktail dinner at Hotel Centara Grand at Central World Bangkok. Prominent among the guests who attended were **Chattan Kunjara Na Ayudhya, Deputy Governor for International Marketing Asia and South Pacific, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), Litti Kewkacha, Executive Vice President, Safari World Public Company Limited, Bangkok, and Prachoom Tantiprasertsuk, Vice President Sales, Dusit International in Bangkok.**

TravelBullz offers more than 1,50,000 hotels in over 100 countries worldwide and a wide variety of tours, transfers and attractions. Over 1,00,000 guests and 1000 groups were managed in 2018, registering a business of \$22 million.

In 2019 TravelBullz expects to close the year with USD 30 million and close to 192,000 guests travelled on their network.

The Event concluded with a Gala Awards Night held at Hotel Centara Grand at Central World Bangkok Hotel. The cocktail dinner included the launch TBZ's brand new booking engine and award ceremony for our industry partners.

The five-day event offered unlimited fun for the employees and also gave them an opportunity to experience the destination.





EVENTS / INTERNATIONAL





Top Hotel Partners

- Best Supporting Hotel Chain – Centara Hotels & Resorts, Thailand
- Best Supporting Hotel Chain – Bella Villa Hotel Group, Pattaya
- Most Promising 5 Star Hotel in Pattaya – Grande Centre Point
- Most Popular 5 Star Hotel in Bangkok – Amari Watgate
- Most Popular City Hotel in Bangkok – Avani Atrium
- Most Popular Beach Hotel – Amari Phuket
- Most Popular Hotel – Groups & Series – Rembrandt Hotel & Suites Bangkok
- Most Popular Budget Hotel – Golden Sea Pattaya
- Most Popular City Attraction – Safari World & Marine Park, Bangkok
- Most Popular M.I.C.E Venue – Nong Nooch Tropical Garden, Pattaya
- Privilege Partner - Juventude International Travel, Ltd

Top Fnb Partners

- Nisha Pub and Restaurant, Pattaya
- Chill & DJ Mart, Pattaya
- Omar Khayyam Restaurant, Pattaya
- India gate, Bangkok
- Utsav, Bangkok
- Rasoi, Bangkok
- Oye! India, Bangkok
- Mumbai Magic Restaurant, Pattaya
- Annapurna Restaurant, Pattaya

Top Logistic Partners

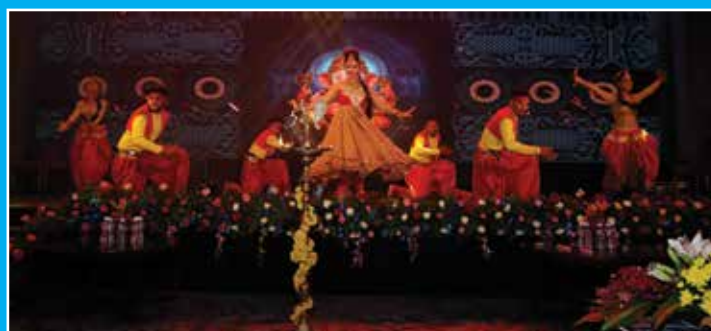
- Quality Island Tours Co. Ltd, Pattaya
- Nokkie Tours & Travel Co., Ltd, Pattaya
- Asia Travel Collection, Bangkok



Explore Experience India

Successful ADTOI's
9th Convention
concluded in
Ahmedabad





Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India (ADTOI), National Body of Domestic Tour Operators, hosted their 9th Convention on 16th and 17th August 2019 in Hyatt Ahmedabad. The body in collaboration with Gujarat Tourism aimed at working towards increasing the tourist inflow in Gujarat. The event observed state tourism professionals visiting and attending the event from across India. With significant increase in domestic tourism, ADTOI's convention-cum-exhibition had the perfect timings to organize this

event. More so recently the Indian Prime Minister Shri. Narendra Modi urged the citizens to explore at least 15 tourist destinations within India by 2022, which impeccably set the tone of the convention concurring with the convention's theme Explore India-Experience India.

Day 1 August 6th, 2019 -

ADTOI's convention kick-started invoking Lord Ganesh with Prayers and Vandana followed by a glitzy launch of the new logo of ADTOI, showcasing the tri-colour logo. The logo in itself had nationalistic feels making the association look more dedicated to building tourism opportunities within the country.

Gujarat Chief Minister Shri Vijay Rupani through a video message welcomed the delegates and highlighted Tourism Potential that the birthplace of Mahatma Gandhi and valiant Vallabh Bhai Patel offers. He spoke about Navratri Festival, Asiatic Lions of Gir Forest, Rann Mahotsav, heritage sites Patan and Champaner and the World Heritage City Ahmedabad. *"Gujarat is renowned across India for its ancient history as well as picturesque scenery. Our government has achieved great success in promoting Gujarat's tourist offerings to international travellers. The world's tallest statue is in Gujarat. Under the tourism policies of 2015 the Gujarat government is making strenuous efforts to boost tourism in the state. Gujarat has welcomed over 5.5 cr tourists and gauging the increase in influx of visitors we are working on further improving the services and amenities."*

Chetan Gupta, General Secretary, ADTOI, in his opening remarks talked about the tourism potential of Gujarat and narrated as to how people of the state are not just business minded but also extremely hospitable and welcoming.

P.P Khanna, President, ADTOI took the lead and welcomed over 400 delegates to the historic city of Ahmedabad. A wave of pride flowed throughout his speech when he talked about Gujarat as a future tourism hub.

He said, "Sampurna Bharat Braham-Explore India, Experience India, aims at boosting tourism within the country. It is important to create awareness about good tourist destinations in the country among Indian travellers. Gujarat, being one of these states, made its way to the top 10 tourist destinations to receive a good tourist inflow. We are very proud of Gujarat as domestic tourism is increasing day by day in this state. Cleanliness, Safety, Connectivity and Security are the 4 pillars that make Gujarat an amiable tourist destination." He also urged the present dignitaries to build airports near main tourist locations in Gujarat, to scrap of GST on domestic travels which fall heavy on traveller's pockets and urged Indians to spend money their money by travelling and marrying within the country so that Indian economy can grow. Lastly, he emphasized travelling to 15 destinations in India by 2022 as told by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

As the session of speeches continued, the Convention saw **Shri S.J. Haider, Principal Secretary, Gujarat Tourism** talked about how rigorously tourism can grow in Gujarat. He pointed out at the iconic destinations within the state like Somnath, Statue of Unity, Gandhi Museum, Rann of Kutch, etc. Further to this, he said, "Gujarat has given so many things to the country- first the PM and now world-class monuments. There are several socio-economic activities that the state is taking part in. The purpose, therefore, is not only to grow tourism in the state but also to strengthen the economic condition of the country."

Mrs Ashima Mehrotra, Director, Ministry of Tourism, congratulated ADTOI for organizing its 9th convention in India's UNESCO recognized heritage city. She talked about the importance of tourism in providing employment and boosting economy and elucidated on the numerous schemes that the Ministry of Tourism is undertaking to boost holistic development in lesser known places. "MoT had suggested few routes to the Ministry of Civil Aviation that can help boost domestic

tourist. Out of these, 8 routes have already become operational. I am also delighted to share that the MoT has revamped its website and has become more interactive and user friendly," she shared.

ADTOI's convention's airline partner, **Air India's CMD, Mr Ashwani Lohani** highlighted as to how airlines facilitate the growth of tourism within India. Talking about the 5 S of tourism said, "Tourism has always been growing and will continue to do so – our job is to facilitate the growth of this stream. This is the field that has multiplier impact – on economy and in the private sector. We have to encourage people to travel and explore places close by. This form of inter-regional and intra-regional travel, if boosted correctly, can have a major impact on the growth of domestic tourism. We need to identify new tourism destinations and work hard on developing infrastructure in form of sanitation, proper signage services etc. PM has laid strong emphasis on boosting domestic tourism by urging people to see at least 5 new destinations every year and we at Air India are preparing special family packages which will help people make the best deal." To aid this we at Air India are planning for special family packages which will help people crack the best deal."

Shri Vasanbhai Ahir, hon'ble Minister of State (Gujarat), Tourism highlighted on the various offerings of Gujarat and elaborated as to how boosting tourism will in turn boost employment and economy. "In the last few years, many small villages of Gujarat have prospered immensely because of growth of tourism in the state. You can roam for a month in Gujarat and see new places, without repetition, such is the potential of its tourism offerings," he elucidated. Close behind,

Shri Pradipsinh Jadeja, hon'ble Minister of State – Home (Gujarat), welcomed delegates and talked about the development of waterfront along river Sabarmati, which was also the brainchild of the hon'ble PM. He further enumerated on the various touristy

offerings that the region has to offer and explained how the Prime Minister Modi, about how Prime Minister Modi has put in efforts to make Gujarat like what it is today.

The day ended with a beautiful dance performed by a dance group.

Day 2 August 17th, 2019 - started with a presentation by the Ministry of Tourism which showcased the flow of domestic tourism within the country. It highlighted the top five states in domestic tourist visits- Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. Furthermore, the presentation gave information on the initiatives taken by the Ministry of Tourism to promote domestic tourism. It referred to Paryatan Parv / Bharat Parv which has 3 main components- 1) Dekho Apna Desh, 2) Tourism for All, and 3) Tourism & Governance.

Air India presentation highlighted about their domestic network that serves 80 destinations in India with 446 Domestic departures a day in addition to 62 international departures a day. The airline takes pride in offering 25kg baggage allowance in economy on Air India on domestic sectors. They offer the most advantageous group packages with very good discounts.

Up next was a panel discussion on 'How can states enhance domestic tourism through PPP Model'. **Vinod Zutshi, Former Secretary, Ministry of Tourism** moderated the session by opening the discussion with the PM's vision requesting people to see 15 destinations by 2022. He agreed that there are gaps in the tourism development of the country in the form of infrastructure, which can be addressed successfully through the PPP model.

Shri Venu Devan, MD and Commissioner of Tourism, Gujarat detailed how the state of Gujarat has many examples of collaboration with the private sector. **Himmat Anand, Managing Director, Tree of Life Hotels and Resorts**, gave the delegates a reality check when he talked about how a PPP model should be attractive and feasible for

the private stakeholder in order to attract him to invest his money in the venture, which he might not own. He also said that in India there exists a huge gap between what the country has and what it actually offers in terms of tourism. **Mr. Yuvraj Padole, Deputy Director, Madhya Pradesh Tourism**, who was representing one of the few Indian states that has successfully implemented the PPP model, explained that the first step in the cycle for them was to develop infrastructure, have a land bank ready and focus on developing all sectors of tourism in the state. "We are planning to invite travel

Power of Networking was another great session wherein the ADTOI Members, mostly chapter chairmen, discussed how working together can assure collective growth of domestic tourism. This session was moderated by **Ashish Gupta, CEO, FAITH. Mr. Bimal Mehta, Chapter Chairman, Gujarat, Mr. Arjit Purkayastha, Chapter Chairman, North East, Mr. Debjit Dutta, Chapter Chairman, West Bengal**. They talked about the power of networking within the tourism industry. The communication gaps are a big reason for tour operators failing to sell destinations

Under the tourism policies of 2015 the Gujarat government is making strenuous efforts to boost tourism in the state. Gujarat has welcomed over 5.5 cr tourists and gauging the increase in influx of visitors we are working on further improving the services and amenities.

agents, tour operators and domestic operators to explore the sites and facilities that we have created and are looking at their small investments, which will also ensure that they will promote the destination," he said.

Following sessions had presentations by the Hyatt Regency Hotel and Madhya Pradesh Tourism, wherein both of them showcased their strengths and future plans. "We are working very strictly on responsible tourism. Started the drive to become a no-plastic state. Focus on 365 days tourism in Madhya Pradesh. Panchmarhi Monsoon Marathon, adventure, heritage, film tourism and plenty of investment options are all being developed in our endeavor to boost tourism. We are also promoting the lesser known destinations through heritage trail," said **Yuvraj Padole in his presentation**.

adequately. A proper network needs to be developed to ease out the processes in the industry.

Chetan Gupta, General Secretary, ADTOI, went ahead and invited all chapter chairmen to join in in the discussion and share their views on the ways through which they can take domestic tourism forward. ADTOI has 10-chapter chairmen as of now. Members in these chapters are growing, which means the ADTOI umbrella is also growing. OTAs, GST, Product Knowledge, reduction in domestic air ticket rate, scarce Human Resource, skill development programs are some of the issues that the members of the association have to collectively address, said P P Khanna.

The convention concluded on a high note with great efforts put in by Team ADTOI.

National Conference concludes successfully



Shri Prahlad Singh Patel urges States for better coordination to promote tourism in the country Hindi version of the new Incredible India website launched by Tourism Minister; Arabic, Chinese and Spanish versions to be launched next month

The one-day National Conference of Tourism Ministers concluded successfully in New Delhi today. Organized by the Union Ministry of Tourism, it was inaugurated by Union Minister of State for Tourism



of Tourism Ministers in New Delhi



& Culture (Independent Charge), Shri PrahladSingh Patel. The conference was attended by State Tourism Ministers of 19 States, Secretaries of Tourism and senior officials from the States and Union Territories (UTs) who deliberated on various issues related to the development and promotion of Tourism.

Speaking on the occasion, the Tourism Minister urged for better coordination between Centre and States to increase number of tourists in India. Highlighting the importance of perception, Shri PrahladSingh Patel said that we need to change the perception of India in the mind of foreign tourists which will yield us good results for promotion of tourism. He asked the States to organize surveys in their respective States to understand how the foreign tourists perceive India and should work towards removing negative impressions, if any. The Minister stated that all of us together have to make concerted efforts to realise the Prime Minister's dream of doubling the tourists, both foreign and domestic over the next five years.

The Tourism Minister launched the Hindi version of the new Incredible India portal at the conference today. He announced that the Arabic, Chinese and Spanish versions of the new Incredible India website will be launched next month. The new Incredible India website was launched on 14th June last year. Since its launch, the website has attracted 85,84,928 total visitors including 65,31,722 Unique Visitors as on 31st July 2019.

Addressing the participants, Shri Patel also urged all the States and UTs to follow the norms of UNESCO while making proposals for Heritage site of their sites with the help of ASI. The Minister said that we have great potential in our natural sites and we should focus on adventure tourism to attract more tourists in this sector. He also said that recently, in order to promote night tourism, the Culture Ministry has decided to open 10 historical monuments till 9 PM for common visitors across the country. He also urged all the States and UTs to

The Tourism Minister launched the Hindi version of the new Incredible India portal at the conference today.

open their important monuments till late night for visitors.

The Tourism Minister launched the Incredible India Tourist Facilitator Certification (IITFC) portal during the conference. The Incredible India Tourist Facilitator Certification (IITFC) Programme is a digital initiative of Ministry of Tourism, Government of India for the citizens of India to become a part of the booming Tourism Industry. It is an online programme where one can learn about tourism at their own time, space, path and pace. The successful completion of this programme would enable the learner to become a Certified Tourist Facilitator of Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.

The Tourism Minister also handed over three new Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) and five new Letters of Intent (LoIs) to the prospective Monument Mitras at the conference.

The Conference provided a platform for the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India to apprise the States / UTs about new initiatives taken and those in the pipeline, to get valuable feedback from the States / UTs on the same, to highlight areas where active cooperation of the States / UTs is required and at the same time to learn about the initiatives being taken by the States / UTs for the development of Tourism.

Discussions were held with the States / UTs to get their inputs and feedback on the following subjects: -

- Developing an all-encompassing One Stop Solution including information on tourism related services through a web based application and a Grievance Redressal Mechanism through Twitter and Tourist-Helpline
- Adoption of Adventure Tourism and

Bed & Breakfast / Homestay Scheme Guidelines by States/UTs

- Status of projects sanctioned under the Swadesh Darshan & PRASHAD Schemes and implementation of Public Financial Management System (PFMS).

Discussions were followed by Presentations which were made by the State Governments of Kerala and Sikkim showcasing their best practices in the tourism sector.

Govt's big push to attract tourists

- **One-month e-visa at flexible charges**
- **Five-year e-visa to cost \$80; lower charge for off-season likely**

Tourism minister Prahlad Singh Patel said a five-year electronic tourist visa may be introduced at a fee of \$80, while there may be various relaxations in e-visa norms and a reduction in charges. Patel made the announcement at the state tourism ministers' conference in New Delhi recently.

The government is also considering a one-month e-visa for tourists at a fee of \$25. It would be reduced to \$10 during the off-season (April-June), initially for tourists from Japan, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Mozambique, Russia, Ukraine, the UK and the US.

The developments followed a meeting involving Prime Minister Narendra Modi and chaired by the principal secretary on measures, to boost flow of foreign tourists.

Patel said the visa fee reduction measures are under consideration of the ministry of external affairs and urged for better coordination between the Centre and states to increase the tourist inflow.

He said everyone has to make a concerted effort to realize the Prime Minister's vision of doubling the number of tourists — both domestic and foreign — in five years. "We need to change the perception of foreign tourists coming to India and work together for that."

Madhya Pradesh Tourism Bagged 10 awards in National Tourism Awards, 2019



in various forms and aim to set new National standards in the field of hospitality and services with these Awards. In the presence of senior officials from the tourism board, tour operators, destination management companies, stakeholders as well as millions of travelers who have visited Madhya Pradesh over the years, we feel honored to receive such Awards”.

The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India annually presents National Tourism Awards to various segments of the travel, tourism and hospitality industry. These awards are presented to State Governments / Union Territories, classified hotels, heritage hotels, approved travel agents, tour operators,

Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board being one of the most active and creative Tourism Board of country awarded with 10 National Awards in different categories viz. Best Adventure State, Excellence in Publishing in Foreign Language – Chinese Brochure, Best Tourism Promotion Publicity Material – Lonely Planet Pocket Guides, Best Maintained & Differently Abled Friendly Monument for Buddhist Monument at Sanchi, Best Wildlife Guide to Mr. Manoj Kumar, Panna, Best Heritage City - Orchha, Best Airport – Indore, Swachhta Award, Indore, Best Tourist Transport Operator to Radiant Travel.

These Awards were presented in National Tourism Awards 2019 organized on 27th September 2019 (World Tourism Day) at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi by Honorable Vice President of India Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu in the Gracious Presence of Union Minister of State for Tourism & Culture (IC)

Shri Prahlad Singh Patel, along with Secretary-General of United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Mr. Zurab Pololikash.

Speaking on the occasion Mr. Faiz Ahmed Kidwai- IAS, Secretary, Govt of Madhya Pradesh, Managing Director, Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board and Madhya Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation said- “It’s a great matter of pride for us that Madhya Pradesh Tourism has again received 10 National Awards in different categories, Madhya Pradesh Tourism under the Guidance of Honorable Minister of Tourism Department and Narmada Valley Development, Government of Madhya Pradesh Shri Surendra Singh Baghel Madhya Pradesh Tourism always tries to excel in every fields related to tourism.

On this special occasion, senior officials of Madhya Pradesh tourism board quoted “We highly appreciate the contribution of tourism industry

tourist transport operators, individuals and other private organizations in recognition of their performance in their respective fields. The National Tourism Awards have, over the years emerged as a prestigious recognition of achievements in the travel, tourism and hospitality sectors

Madhya Pradesh offers an assortment of attractions to everyone who loves to travel. It is the state with the forest area cover of 77,700 sq.kms filled with Sal Trees & Bamboos. It has numerous wildlife hotspots with 11 National parks & 24 Wildlife sanctuaries such as Satpura Wildlife Sanctuary and Chambal Ghadiyal Sanctuary. The UNESCO world heritage sites of Khajuraho, Bhimbetka & Sanchi are the iconic sites in Madhya Pradesh. Madhya Pradesh has re-gained the tag of being “Tiger State of the Country” by having maximum tiger count (526) in the state. The roar of Tigers has increased in the dense and beautiful forests of Madhya Pradesh.

Paryatan Parv



India is full of diversity and it makes India different and unique in comparison to rest of the world, Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Prakash Javadekar recently said. He said as per appeal of Prime Minister Narendra Modi everyone should visit 15 places of India by 2022/ he appreciated the work of Tourism Ministry regarding development of tourism sector in the country.

Mr. Javadekar said this after inaugurating nationwide: "Paryatan Parv 2019" along with Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. Union Tourism Minister and Culture Minister Prahlad Singh Patel



2019

India's diversity makes it unique in comparison to rest of the world: Javadekar



was also present on the occasion.

The festival was inaugurated with fanfare amongst the beating of drums and cultural performances.

Organized by the Ministry of Tourism, the Paryatan Parv 2019 will be held from October 2 to 13 across the country. The Delhi leg of the Parv is being held from October 2 to 6 at Rajpath lawns between Rafi Marg and Janpath.

Addressing the gathering, Mr. Pradhan said the country has been bestowed with thousands of tourist attractions, spread in almost every district. He called upon the countrymen and the foreign tourists to move into

the countryside and visit the less explored places which have historical, cultural or religious significance, or just to visit the places with scenic beauty.

He complimented the ministry of tourism for organizing such events and undertaking the promotional efforts which has led to 1.5 times jump in the number of foreign visitors in last five years.

He said tourism in the country provides substantial employment opportunities and contributes much to the national GDP.

He said organizing such festivals provides opportunity and exposure to common man to experience and

appreciate the cultural and other types of varieties in the country. This also binds and unites the people, the Minister said.

Mr. Patel expressed happiness that the inauguration of the Paryatan Parv is coinciding with the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatama Gandhi.

“To understand soul of the country, the Father of the Nation toured throughout the country and we can come close to our culture and people by the medium of tourism,” the Tourism Minister elaborated.

He said the Prime Minister is Brand Ambassador of the country and due to his efforts tourism has shown a tremendous growth over the five years. In fact, the world tourism ranking of the country has jumped from 65 in 2013 to 34 in 2019, he explained.

Mr. Patel assured that as outlined by the Prime Minister, the doubling of number of tourists will be achieved much before the set target of 2022.

The Paryatan Parv has 31 stalls of Central government ministries as well as from states and UTs. Around 59 food stalls representing cuisines from all over the country have also been set up.

The idea of Paryatan Parv is to propagate the message of “Dekho Apna Desh”, with the objective to encourage Indians to visit various tourist destinations of the country and also to spread the message of “Tourism for All”. A multimedia exhibition organized by Bureau of Outreach Communication of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on 150th Birth anniversary of Mahatama Gandhi was also inaugurated by the three Ministers.

Vice President of India Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu

presents the
National Tourism Awards 2017-18 on
World Tourism Day in New Delhi



Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu presented the National Tourism Awards 2017-18 on World Tourism Day in New Delhi recently. A total of 76 Awards under various categories were presented. The Union Minister of State for Tourism & Culture (IC) Shri Prahlad Singh Patel; Secretary-General of United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Mr. Zurab Pololikashvili; Tourism Minister of Paraguay Ms. Sofia Montiel De Afara; Tourism Secretary Shri Yogendra Tripathi; DG Tourism Smt. Meenakshi Sharma, senior officers of Ministry of tourism and 82 international delegates were among those present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, the Vice President Shri M Venkaiah Naidu urged all stake holders of

the tourism industry to be especially mindful of their ecological footprint and called for more responsible and sustainable tourism practices. He further urged the people, especially the youth to visit at least 15 tourist destinations within India by 2022 to give boost to domestic tourism, as per the suggestion made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Shri Naidu urged students to undertake 'Bharat Darshan' to learn about various facets of India's culture, heritage, languages and cuisine and enhance their understanding of the unique cultural mosaic of the country. The Vice President also underscored India's tremendous potential in the field of medical tourism and said that India must leverage its ancient practices of healing such as Ayurveda and Yoga to attract more tourists who seek holistic wellness.

Union Minister of State for Culture & Tourism (IC) expressed his happiness at India being selected as the host country for celebration of World Tourism Day 2019 by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). He congratulated all the awardees and said that we believe in 'Atithi Devo Bhava' and that is why our tourists are very important for us. He added that the Indian government is continuously taking tourist friendly decisions like reduction of E-tourist visa fees, making available an extended e-tourist visa, reduction in GST on hotel tariffs being some of the recent important ones which will go a long way in giving boost to tourism in the country.

The Union Minister said that tourism sector is a revenue generating sector. But apart from revenue, we also want to change the perception. He added

that in the last five years India has improved its position tremendously in world travel and competitiveness index from 65 in 2013 to 34 in 2019. The credit for it goes to the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi who has proudly presented India at international levels as a brand ambassador of the country.

Later, Tourism Minister Shri Prahlad Singh Patel & Secretary General UNWTO Mr. Zurab Pololikashvili announced that the Online Academy of UNWTO will make available tourism related courses in Hindi also on their Academy portal. The Union Minister thanked the UNWTO for India in its endeavours to promote tourism. The Tourism Minister further announced that from next year onwards there will be a new special category in Tourism Awards for persons demonstrating extraordinary actions like saving the life of a tourist in life threatening situation etc.

Mr. Zurab Pololikashvili said that India is a rapidly growing economy and is also making the desired reforms, all of which offers a lot of opportunities for the tourist sector. It is for this reason there is a need to educate and train more people quickly and UNWTO is happy to collaborate with India for tourism related opportunities.

The Union Minister of State for Tourism & Culture (IC) Shri Prahlad Singh Patel and Tourism Minister of Paraguay Ms. Sofia Montiel De Afara also signed a Tourism Cooperation Agreement after the event.

On this occasion, a workshop on 'Tourism Jobs of the Future' was also organized by UNWTO in collaboration with its affiliate member in India, Outlook Responsible Tourism Initiative. The workshop was held to provide a platform for tourism MSMEs and social entrepreneurs in India to explore how to accommodate in the future tourism

trends, scale up their activities and tourism practices and create more job opportunities in their communities.

A Panel discussion was held on 'Maximizing Tourism's potential to create more and better Jobs' in addition to a presentation 'The Future is Now-The UNWTO Online Academy' by UNWTO.

The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India annually presents National Tourism Awards to various segments of the travel, tourism and hospitality industry. These awards are presented to State Governments / Union Territories, classified hotels, heritage hotels, approved travel agents, tour operators, tourist transport operators, individuals and other private organizations in recognition of their performance in their respective fields. The National Tourism Awards have, over the years emerged as a prestigious recognition of achievements in the travel, tourism and hospitality sectors.



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Kazakhstan

welcomes over 1,200 delegates to PATA Travel Mart 2019

PATA Travel Mart 2019 (PTM 2019), generously hosted by the Ministry of Culture and Sports of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Kazakh Tourism National Company, has attracted over 1,200 delegates from 63 global destinations. The delegate numbers embraced 347 sellers from 180 organisations and 34 destinations, along with 252 buyers from 244 organisations and 48 source markets with first time buyers comprising 44% of the total.

The Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) was also pleased to welcome 190 local and international students and young tourism professionals. The students from 8 local universities in Almaty and Nur-Sultan, as well as students from Malaysia, India and Canada, were part of the

PATA Youth Symposium held on Wednesday, September 18, organised in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and Sports of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kazakh Tourism National Company and M. Narikbayev KAZGUU University.

PTM 2019 officially opened in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan on Wednesday, September 18 with the PTM 2019 Welcome Reception, presided by Ms. Aktoty Raimkulova, Minister of Culture and Sports of the Republic of Kazakhstan, taking place at the Radisson Hotel, Astana.

Early in the day, delegates had the chance to gain insights into the power of technology and the evolution of content marketing at the Travolution Asia Forum 2019, organised in

partnership with Travel Weekly Group, and the Content Marketing Forum, in partnership with UpThink.

Addressing a media briefing on Thursday, September 19 at the Korme Exhibition Center, the official venue of the event, Dr. Hardy said, "This marks the first time that PATA is organizing an event in Central Asia, and our aim is to highlight the unexplored region of Central Asia and particularly Kazakhstan. Unexplored by many, PATA Travel Mart provides the perfect opportunity to showcase this unique destination vast landscapes and beautiful culture and heritage."

During the event, PATA officially welcomed the Ministry of Culture and Sports of the Republic of Kazakhstan as its newest government member.

HILTON DALAMAN SARIGERME RESORT & SPA INVITES HONEYMOON COUPLES

to live a wedding in a splendid atmosphere



A landscape showcasing the splendid beauties of Aegean and Mediterranean... A hotel that blends architecture with the surrounding nature, offering an environment of luxury and comfort...sunbathing and relaxation areas in the form of small-scale beach houses on a beach exclusive to the hotel...A dedicated spa centre, where you can leave all tiredness of your wedding behind, designed with a particular manner...A swimming pool where you can enjoy special moments under the bright blue sky from your private terrace...Romantic restaurants that delight the palate.....Bars and performances illuminating your evenings with festivity...An exclusive service manner...

They say, "It continues as it begins". A honeymoon experience where every detail is delicately considered is a unique choice for couples taking their first step in life together at the Hilton Dalaman Sarigerme Resort & Spa, where glorious nature meets maximum luxury. After your wedding, spoil yourself with your one and only...

The Hilton Dalaman Sarigerme Resort & Spa invites you to experience service and offers dedicated to making you feel very special, comfort that embraces you with its details, a delicious culinary journey, sumptuous spa treatments... a joyous adventure filled with colour, and natural surroundings formed by the union of blue and green...all together in

your honeymoon, where you will have the most beautiful moments of your life...

Whether you seek a romantic interlude with just the two of you, or a festive time surrounded by old and new friends, our hotel offers privileged services that will transform your honeymoon into an absolute dream... With five restaurants presenting the best flavours in international cuisine... seven bars where drinks and entertainment are simply redefined, outdoor swimming pools with sparkling water and relaxing pools that promise romance and tranquillity... the Elysion Spa offering 6,000 square metres of luxe treatments... a dedicated 650-metre-long beach and gazebos where you can enjoy sea, sun and sand amid a superior service understanding...all awaits you.

A SPECIAL CONCEPT FOR HONEYMOON COUPLES

Services dedicated to honeymoon couples at the Hilton Dalaman Sarigerme Resort & Spa are extraordinary... with the Honeymoon Duplex Suite option other than the standard honeymoon package. In the Honeymoon Suite, you'll find a Jacuzzi, a sauna and a terrace as well as a living room and a plush bedroom. But this is not all: When



you take your first step into your most beautiful journey, you are brought to the hotel with a private transfer service. You are welcomed with Champagne and chocolate as you enter the hotel, and with wine, fruit, and appetizers in your room. As a special treat on to your first day, an in-room breakfast and or breakfast in a private area in the restaurant are just the beginning. Accommodation in a seafront Gazebo House, a massage in your room or the spa centre await you, all there to help you make beautiful memories during your honeymoon and your stay at the Hilton Dalaman Sarigerme Resort & Spa.

Whether you choose to stay in the Honeymoon Duplex Suite or in one of the hotel's comfortable rooms ... all honeymoon couples married within two weeks - without any exceptions - are invited to enjoy dinner in an à la carte

restaurant, accommodation in a Gazebo House for one day, a fruit basket in the room, and other surprises in one day - as you select during your stay, and as you wish.

HILTON DALAMAN SARIGERME RESORT & SPA: THE NEW HONEYMOON DESTINATION FOR INDIAN TOURISTS

In recent months, guests from India have joined us at the Hilton Dalaman Sarigerme Resort & Spa, embracing the unique geography of the region. The Hilton Dalaman Sarigerme Resort & Spa was honoured to host a traditional, fabulous Indian wedding, while the happy couple enjoy their honeymoon privileges at the Hilton Dalaman Sarigerme Resort & Spa.



Hilton

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