



Message from the Chairman

Tourism was one of the fastest-growing industries in the world that had a growth rate that surpassed the growth rate of GDPs in certain countries. Unfortunately, the outbreak of the pandemic and associated restrictions severely affected all the economies that were dependent on tourism which led to a deep contraction in their gross domestic product. The importance of this industry to a country's economy was highlighted with the outbreak of the pandemic to a greater extent than before.



The past two years made the travellers comprehend the importance and the contribution of their travel decisions to a local economy. The pandemic also taught us the importance of engaging in positive practices, including wellness activities, giving back to communities and protecting the environment.

With the long lockdowns and restrictions that disrupted the normalcy of life, the pandemic gave a break to everyone from their busy lives to take a moment to re-prioritize their values. In return people started to reconnect and reengage with what they value the most. Therefore, the post-pandemic traveler will demand for experiences that are educational and entertaining for all ages, mostly where families could make new memories together.

Having been grounded and confined for more than two years, travellers are also eager to experience destinations that are safe and tranquil – places which were overlooked previously - as the pandemic has changed the moods and preferences of the travellers.

Even though the pandemic was financially devastating for many, it has also allowed professionals to save up by working from home. According to a report issued by the World Travel & Tourism Council on trends in travel post-pandemic, has stated that 70% of leisure travellers from countries such as the U.S., the U.K., Canada, Japan and Spain are expected to increase their travel spending in 2022 from corresponding amounts in the past five years.

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With the rising traveler demand, international tourism is expected to continue its gradual recovery in 2022 subsequent to the unprecedented drop of 2020 and 2021. As per the World Trade Organization (UNWTO), January 2022 commenced with a better performance compared with January 2021.

The growth of 130% in tourist arrivals recorded in January 2022 compared with the figure in January 2021 is equal to the increase in arrivals reported for the whole year of 2021 as per UNWTO. This reflects a positive rebound for the industry for all regions. As per UNWTO statistics, Europe with a 199% growth and the Americas with a 97% growth recorded the strongest results in international arrivals, while the Asia-Pacific region recorded a 44% year-on-year increase in January 2022.

However, the war in Ukraine may also pose challenges to the industry with the threat it imposes on the global economic environment and the traveler confidence. Markets such as Europe and East Asia will be most affected due to longer flights with higher costs resulting from the shutdown of air spaces. For instance, Russia is a major destination for countries such as Maldives, Seychelles, and Sri Lanka. As per UNWTO, with the continuation of this conflict between these two major markets, the industry will tend to lose USD14 Billion in global tourism receipts as Russia and Ukraine alone accounted for a combined 3% of global spending on international tourism in 2020.

It may still be too early to assess the extent of the impact of the Ukraine-Russia conflict, but it is evident that it will add further pressure to the already challenging economic conditions, undermining consumer confidence and raising investment uncertainty.

However, on the bright side, the wanderlust that drove the industry still remains unchanged. Undoubtedly, the travelers are keen to explore other tourist destinations more than ever before. The sector should be ready to welcome back the most awaited traveler to provide them with incredible experiences, thereby building back a better world for our people and the planet by making use of the lessons learnt from these unprecedented times.

Anura Lokuhetty
Chairman
Asian Council on Tourism

Rebuilding Tourism Through Small Businesses



Governments, and their associated destination marketing organizations (DMOs), have a unique opportunity to develop an interconnected payments ecosystem. The benefits will be particularly felt by small businesses, which account for 97% of all businesses in Asia according to a recent report from the Asian Development Bank, and account for most businesses in the tourism sector—80% according to the latest estimate by the World Travel & Tourism Council. A tourist—particularly an international one—appreciates simple, secure and standardized experiences in core areas such as payments.



micro businesses that want to sell online but can't support an app of their own.

Related to trust is the importance of building customer loyalty. Unlike larger businesses such as hotel chains with multiple locations under a single brand, small businesses in tourism won't necessarily benefit from offering a rewards program of their own. Payment-linked offers and rewards could be one way for small businesses to achieve the same reach, and DMOs could play a critical role in facilitating access. Integrated tourism apps for destinations could serve as secure and trusted loyalty platforms for small businesses while also helping DMOs better use data insights to support the ecosystem.

Governments and DMOs could also address the tourism sector's seasonal liquidity challenges by using payments to connect businesses across different management platforms. A central list of buyers and suppliers in the tourism sector could pull small businesses together in an industry-agnostic directory to unlock cashflow efficiencies.

The approach could also help DMOs establish integrated tourism engagement platforms and marketplace websites. These could provide trusted solutions for

A recent Mastercard report looks at the benefits of a coordinated approach from two sides: business to consumer (B2C) and business to business (B2B). Download the full report to learn how governments and their associated DMOs can help coordinate services and solutions for SMEs in the tourism industry: [Strength in numbers: Coordinating small businesses in the tourism sector](#).

Mastercard recognises that as borders reopen and travel returns, it will be more important than ever for tourism to rebuild in ways that drive resilience and create opportunities for small businesses to digitally transform themselves.

This is why Mastercard launched the Tourism Innovation Hub earlier in 2022 in Spain, to foster research, apply data insights and co-design technology solutions for the sector. The global tourism industry has been through a tough couple of years, and Mastercard is committed to providing digital-first solutions and data-driven insights to governments and small businesses worldwide for a more inclusive, equitable and sustainable recovery.

Mastercard hosted a launch event for the Tourism Innovation Hub in partnership with the UNWTO on 17th to 18th May 2022. To learn more about participation, please contact government@mastercard.com.

Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Blog

Taiwan promotes literature, tourism at LA book fair

By Lin Hung-han and Evelyn Kao



Visitors to the book fair browse the display set up by Taiwan's Tourism Bureau. Central News Agency photo April 26, 2022

Taiwan's booth at the just-concluded Los Angeles Times Festival of Books attracted lots of attention from visitors from around the United States, many of whom were eager to resume traveling after the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the Taiwan Tourism Bureau's Los Angeles office.

As one of the nation's largest literary events, the annual

festival usually attracts about 150,000 people every April at the University of Southern California (USC).

In 2022, it was held on April 23-24, featuring hundreds of exhibitors who filled the USC campus.

However, due to the pandemic, the event was held virtually in the past two years.

While the bureau usually runs a booth at the book festival to promote Taiwan tourism, for the festival in 2022, the bureau's Los Angeles office teamed up with the Taiwan Academy of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Los Angeles, the Culture Center of Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Los Angeles, and the Taiwan Centers for Mandarin Learning.

Shih Chao-hui, the head of the bureau's LA office, said that 2022's book festival showcased books and publications covering a range of areas such as travel and tourism, gardening, and delicacies, attracting visitors of all ages.

As the COVID-19 pandemic slows down in the United States, many Americans are eager to resume international travel, Shih noted.

Several American exhibitors from the tourism industry also promoted tailored travel itineraries, and expressed hope that Taiwan will open its border to international travelers, according to Shih.

Centered around the theme "Literature and Migration: Flowing Across Words," the Taiwan booth showcased the English versions of Taiwanese literary works such as *The Stolen Bicycle* by Wu Ming-yi, as well as *Running Mother* and *Sailing to Formosa: A Poetic Companion to Taiwan* by Guo Song-fen.

Many visitors to the booth had either been to Taiwan or an interest in Asian culture, according to Chien Teh-yuan, the head of the Taiwan Academy in Los Angeles, who discussed stories in the booth's books with several visitors.

You Shu-min, a Taiwanese student at USC, was drawn to the Taiwan booth by a volunteer dressed in a Formosan black bear costume, and said she felt at home due to the kiosk's promotion of Taiwan tourism and culture.

Another booth visitor, a young woman who has traveled to Taiwan, said she had been impressed by the food and people in Taiwan as well as its stunning scenic attractions such as the beaches in Kenting in the southernmost county of Pingtung.

A young father with a Taiwanese background pushing his baby in a stroller said he was looking to take his child who had not been to Taiwan to visit the homeland of his parents after the COVID-19 pandemic ends.

Focus Taiwan

Nepal tourism eyes new start as COVID-19 departs

By Deutsche Welle

Tourists are returning to Nepal as the Himalayan country lifted pandemic travel restrictions after a steady drop in coronavirus cases.

Visitors can again take advantage of a visa-on-arrival program and no longer need to worry about a vaccine mandate in Nepal.

Nandini Lahe-Thapa, Director of Nepal Tourism Board (NTB), told Deutsche Welle (DW) that more tourists have arrived in Nepal since the beginning of 2022 than in all of 2021.

"This shows the tourism sector is reviving and recovering...people are feeling confident to travel," she said.

In 2021, the NTB recorded some 150,000 foreign visitors. For comparison, in the first three weeks of April 2022 alone, the NTB counted nearly 50,000 tourists.

However, the arrivals remain far lower than prepandemic levels. Nepal welcomed some 310,000 tourists during the first quarter of 2019, and some 220,000 tourists during the same period in 2020, according to data compiled by the Department of Immigration (DoI).

In 2019, Nepal had welcomed a total of 1.3 million foreign tourists arriving by plane. This doesn't include those arriving by land from India.



Nepal has seen more tourists arrive since January than in all of 2021

According to the Nepal Rastra Bank, the tourism sector provides employment for about 20% of Nepal's workforce and contributes to 3% of gross domestic product (GDP).

Mountaineers return to the Himalayas

Mountaineers and trekkers are leading the return. According to the Department of Tourism (DoT), over 870 foreign mountaineers have so far in 2022 applied for permits to scale more than 20 of Nepal's Himalayan peaks during the spring season. Out of this, 300 were issued permits to scale Mt. Everest, most from the US and Europe.

More than 302 mountaineers are issued permits to scale Mt. Everest alone, majority of them are from the US and Europe.

As the flow of travelers increases, hotels and guest houses have filled up in the eastern Solukhumbu District, a prime starting point for many mountaineers and trekkers.

Ashok Pokharel, Chairman of Nepal Association of Tour Operators (NATO), told DW that most of the adventure tourists who have started visiting Nepal are young risk-takers.

"This is a natural rebound after the pandemic waned," he said. "The government and other stakeholders now should come

up with a substantive plan as to how to restore the entire tourism and hospitality industry and sustain business.”

The NTB said most of the tourists are from India, the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany and France.

Before the pandemic, China was a major source of tourism in Nepal, but strict pandemic measures keep tourism from China cut off. Prepandemic, there had been four direct flights from China.

Pokharel said that Nepal is working on enhancing tourism capacity and is ready to welcome Chinese travelers again.

Challenges with restarting tourism

Nepal’s tourism and hospitality industry continues to face shortages as the majority of employees left the sector during the pandemic.

Many tour guides and service staff either changed their profession or left the country in search of work.

Thapa from the NTB said that the tourism sector is set to recover gradually as more workers return. However, people remained worried about a possible return of pandemic restrictions.

Stakeholders are worried about the consequences of the pandemic coupled with the ongoing Russia and Ukraine war on tourism sectors and its swift revival.

Director General of the DoI, Narayan Prasad Bhattarai told DW that number of arrivals slowed down recently reports of surging coronavirus cases in neighboring India. The economic impact of the war in Ukraine is also affecting global tourism.

“The war has dented hope of the swift revival of the tourism industry in near future as it has pushed up travel expenses and disrupted flight routes,” he said.

Edited by: Wesley Rahn

Taiwan News

Japan government to support tourism on remote islands, preserve territorial waters

The Japan News/Asia News Network

The Japanese government has decided to strengthen its support for the promotion of tourism in areas designated as specific inhabited remote border islands, with a view to preserving territorial waters as well.

The economies of remote islands in particular have been hit hard by the decline in tourism due to the spread of the novel coronavirus. The initiative also aims to prevent the islands from losing population and becoming uninhabitable, which will help preserve Japan’s territorial waters.

The program would be launched as early as the end of March.



Rebun Island in Hokkaido Yomiuri Shimbun. FILE PHOTO via The Japan News/Asia News Network

The government plans to subsidize 55% of a project cost to local governments for initiatives utilizing the unique tourism resources of remote islands, such as rich nature, history and fresh marine products.

For example, the government envisions tours that include a meal coupon for local seafood and a transportation ticket, and the development of new specialty foods.

The government also plans to support the training of tour guides and the creation of brochures.

Based on the special measures law for preserving inhabited remote island areas that came into force in 2016, the government has been promoting measures to maintain social and economic activities of remote border islands as part of efforts to prevent them from becoming uninhabited.

The government is concerned that if the islands become uninhabited, it will become difficult to use them as a base of operations for security in the surrounding waters — which could hinder the preservation of territorial waters.

The government has designated 71 specific inhabited remote border islands in 29 municipalities of Tokyo and seven prefectures — including Rebun Island in Hokkaido, Sado Island in Niigata Prefecture and Tsushima Island in Nagasaki Prefecture — under the special measures law. The population of each island varies from about 50,000 to a few.

Tourism is a major earner on many islands, and its decline amid the coronavirus crisis has been deeper than the national average.

According to the Japan Tourism Agency, the number of travelers who stayed on remote islands declined about 75% in April-June 2021 from the same period in 2019. The number of travelers nationwide declined about 58% in the same period.

The sharp decline is believed to have been caused by limits on transportation to the islands and the reluctance of residents to accept visitors in fear of infection with the novel coronavirus.

The government is concerned that if tourism continues to be sluggish, more people will leave the islands, which could cause a further decline in the population.

INQUIRER.net

ASEAN-Korea Centre seeks sustainable tourism as some pandemic restrictions are lifted

By Kwon Mee-yoo



Kim Hae-yong, secretary general of the ASEAN-Korea Centre, delivers opening remarks during the "Seminar on ASEAN-Korea Culture and Tourism" at Westin Josun Seoul, April 26. Courtesy of ASEAN-Korea Centre

The ASEAN-Korea Centre hosted a symposium called "Seminar on ASEAN-Korea Culture and Tourism 2022," seeking to rekindle tourism in ASEAN member states as well as Korea as the world finally starts to see some light at the end of the pandemic tunnel.

The two-day seminar, which started on April 26, consisted of an online discussion about ways to develop sustainable tourism through digitalization in a post-pandemic era. This was followed by a group workshop on April 27 focusing on the metaverse and digital marketing.

"COVID-19 has made an unprecedented impact on not only the world but also the travel industry. While the past two years of the pandemic have involved much hardship, lessons were learned and the global community has sought ways to adapt and pave the road to recovery," ASEAN-Korea Centre Secretary General Kim Hae-yong said in the opening remarks of the seminar.

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) expects a rebound in global tourism by the third quarter of this year. In fact, international tourist arrivals around the world have more than doubled in January 2022, compared to the same period of 2021.

With increases in travel so far in 2022, ASEAN is taking the initiative and reopening borders and revitalizing tourism in the region. Most member states have opened their doors to vaccinated visitors. ASEAN and Korea had over 12 million people traveling back and forth in 2019. This gradual reopening of the region is a welcome sign displaying a partial return to normality.

"To steer a new course in the post-pandemic era, it is important that ASEAN and Korea look beyond recovery and build resilience and sustainability. Therefore, digitalization as the transition into smart tourism is the way forward... Establishing the foundations of sustainable tourism will play an important role in the opening phase of the (ASEAN) region," Kim said.

Sergio Guerreiro, OECD Tourism Committee chairman, gave a keynote speech on "Smart Tourism: A path forward for a resilient future." Guerreiro noted several trends accelerated by the pandemic, including digitalization.



Experts discuss sustainable tourism through digitalization during the "Seminar on ASEAN-Korea Culture and Tourism" at Westin Josun Seoul, April 26. Courtesy of ASEAN-Korea Centre

"We saw, in every economic activity and in any segment of the tourism sector, an increased demand for contactless services for online purchasing, for online payments, for visitor tracking and management processes," Guerreiro said.

"The second point is there was a huge adoption of new digital practices by SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises), which take up 98 percent of our (tourism) sector worldwide... Almost all governments worldwide invest significantly in different types of approaches to accelerate the digital agenda in our sector."

Since the tourism sector largely consists of SMEs and workers with relatively lower digital skills than the tech sector, one of the key challenges is to extend the use of digital technologies throughout the tourism workforce.

"We've been trying to analyze and prioritize policies that can actually close the gaps in terms of digital skills in infrastructure. One lesson that we have is don't look at the present, but look at the future because things are moving at such a speed and it is important to understand what is ahead in terms of digital revolution," he said.

The first session dealt with "Coping with COVID-19: Journey to digital transformation," presenting topics such as ASEAN hygiene standards in the with-COVID era by ASEAN Secretariat senior tourism officer Carla Budiarto, digital transition of tourism destinations and trends in Korea by Kim Min-hye of the Incheon Tourism Organization and developing promotional materials with local content creators by Unique Good Company CEO Song In-hyuk.

In the second session centering on "Sustainable Tourism: Effort to build a more resilient future," Hoy Phireak, deputy director-general of the Ministry of Tourism in Cambodia, shared tourism standards for a sustainable and resilient ASEAN, while a Korean Air deputy general manager presented the airline industry's sustainability strategy for digitalization. Jeju Olle Foundation Managing Director Lee Young-il introduced sustainable tourism in local destinations with the example of the Jeju Olle Trail created for hikers throughout the southern resort island.

The Korea Times

Invigorating Philippine tourism with local culture

By John Legaspi



Showcasing Filipino Hospitality through a fiesta inspired poolside event at the Savoy Hotel Manila during the Mega European Familiarization 2022 event.



Members of the Destination Management Companies, International media from Spain, Italy and United Kingdom, Philippine Department of Tourism, and top executives of Megaworld Hotels and Resorts.

Rekindle the joys of traveling with no less than the biggest homegrown hotel chain operator in the Philippines

In 2022, summertime in the Philippines becomes even more special because, after two years of being cooped up in the safety of their home, Filipinos can now go to places much like how it was during the pre-pandemic time. And for the tourism and hospitality industries, the best way to meet these revenge travelers, local or international, is by putting Filipino culture in the spotlight.

That is what Megaworld Hotels and Resorts (MHR) as it partners with the Department of Tourism United Kingdom (UK) through its MEGA European Familiarization Tour 2022 held at Savoy Hotel Manila in Newport City Pasay last April 21. The business-to-business (B2B) networking event gathered major destination management companies to connect with some of the biggest travel tour operators from Spain, Italy, and the UK as they get a potent dose of Filipino heritage.



Lynette Ermac, Group Director of Sales and Marketing for Megaworld Hotels and Resorts

“Meeting everyone face to face is in itself a huge step towards embracing the return of better business and tourism for the Philippines” said Lynette Ermac, group director of Sales and Marketing for Megaworld Hotels and Resorts. “Seeing partners present like Baron Travel, Intas Destination Management, Travelexperts, Shroff International Travel Care Inc., Travelite Travel and Tours Co., Blue Horizons Travel and Tours, Uni-Orient Travel and Tours, Annset Holidays, Ark Travel Express, Marsman Drysdale along with other European based tour operators similar to Social Trinity, Anywhere We Roam, Flight Centre, Dial-A-Flight, Tru Travel,

Bamboo Travel, and Moresand is a confident representation that the industry needs right now for it to get back on its feet.”

Fiesta Filipinas

Carrying the pride for quintessential Filipino Hospitality, the event showcased what makes any trip always more fun in the Philippines. “Allowing our partners to rediscover our nation in the new normal and all that it has to offer will work wonders for larger traveling groups to keep us part of their itinerary,” Ermac suggested.

During the event, the guests were welcomed by the loud roars of festival drums with ushers donning modern Filipiniana. They were also treated with harana (live serenade) of original Filipino ballads and a visual journey with an exhibit by Nami Art Gallery featuring masterpieces by local artists Ojing Señara, Doy Kastilyo, Christian Regis, and Fidel Sarmiento curated by Nami Art Gallery. The fiesta spirit continues with the performance by Iloilo’s Dinagyang Festival Street Dancers.

The Philippines on a plate

This kind of festivity will, of course, not be complete without a banquet filled with delectable eats and drinks. Guests went on a truly Filipino gastronomic journey with a serving of classic street-side treats from sorbetes, halo-halo, and taho to fish ball and mani. Brining a celebration of Filipino flavors is the 360° grazing table that displayed artisan cheese and local charcuterie, dried fruits, whole salmon tinapa, and even a market-style local fruit stand featuring endemic produce from around the Philippines. Guests also fell in love with decadent champorado cakes and Bulacan’s best chicharron brittle, macapuno balls, and the must try espasol pralines. The spread also included a carving station that paid tribute to the country’s rich seafood offers like tuna sashimi and Aklan’s oyster shacklings that were best paired with sinamak vinegar, sago small, guso seaweeds, pomelo, and



Raising a toast and officially opening the event in hopes of a more progressive tourism industry (from left) Pura Molintas, Tead Head for Northern and Southern Europe, Mediterranean and Oceania, Nerissa Del Fierro-Juan, Head of Europe Division International Promotions Department, Glen Agustin, Chief for Market Development, Cleofe Albiso, Managing Director of MHR, Hon. Leo Lim, Ambassador of Denmark, Sharlene Zabala-Batin, MPA DOT Regional Director for NCR, Gerry Pangan DOT Attache'-Europe.

pako. The Lechon Batangas was also a crowd getter especially when dipped in bringhe, pinakurat vinegar, or coffee sauce. Just like a true fiesta, Lechon Baka or US Prime Rib served with mangosteen jam made it all a cultural gustatory delight that everyone enjoyed.

To keep everyone in high spirit, a mixology 101 courtesy of Emperador Distillers Inc. showed them how to concoct new cocktail mixes like the Palamig, which makes use of anise, honey, calamansi, and soda; Presko with mango, basil, calamansi and sprite; Guava Empire mixing guava, mango, lime and sprite; and Canadian Screw prepared with whisky and orange.

Manila Bulletin

Caravan Tourism: Next big thing for tourism in India; Know all about it here

Caravans could be the new travel trend, but there are many factors that are affecting the growth of this kind of tourism in the country.

In the West, it is pretty normal for families to own a caravan or even rent one for a road trip or a vacation. It is no news that caravan tourism is immensely popular in foreign countries, but the good news is, that this caravan culture has found its way in India as well! In fact, state governments are now pushing for it, especially with the ongoing pandemic.

Kerala recently introduced caravans and caravan parks to promote tourism in the state. V R Krishna Teja, director, Kerala Tourism revealed that as of now, about 150 people have registered for bringing in 350 caravans and around 90 people for bringing in around 120 caravan parks. Kerala opened its first caravan park in Vagamon, a hill station, as part of the state government's new Caravan Tourism policy.

Earlier, Maharashtra and Goa had also introduced the concept of caravan tourism. Needless to say, this unique tourism model is all set to be a major eye-catcher in the tourism sector.

But what is this caravan tourism and

why is there a growing demand for it? Let's find out.

Caravan tourism is a new and exciting way to experiment with unconventional modes of transportation, which promotes touring with family to destinations where it could be difficult to find adequate hotel accommodation. Sachin Panchal, founder, Motohom – the official caravan vendors of Maharashtra Tourism, told The Indian Express that caravans give the freedom to live and travel hassle-free. You can decide where you want to settle, or sleep and whether to wake up to the sound of nature or next to the beach. It is a comfortable blend of travel, leisure and accommodation. In fact, the government has cited that currently there is an increase in demand for eco, adventure, wildlife and pilgrimage tourism. Since remote areas have a shortage of accommodation, caravan tourism holds the potential to meet this demand.

Now let's understand why there is a growing demand for this kind of unique tourism. According to Panchal, the statistics show that because of Covid-19, people want to travel with a limited crowd, mainly with their family and close ones. To travel via caravan is the best way as it fulfills all

those necessities. Jigyasu Joshi, co-founder, Carvaa India told the Indian Express that the curve is going only upward in the last two years. This is probably because of the health safety it provides, especially with the pandemic going on. Joshi added that people want to travel in a bubble and a caravan provides just that. The travellers believe that end-to-end connectivity and flexibility, and comfort are some of the key factors in favour of caravan tourism. Caravan solves the problem for those who want to experience the interiors of the place they want to travel to and connect with its locals.

In fact, with sustainability gaining so much importance among travellers over time, caravan tourism helps in reducing carbon footprints as well. Conventional tourism impacts the environment in more than one way. But, if you are travelling via caravans, there is limited space and limited resources. This limitation, itself, makes caravan tourism more eco-friendly. Explaining the same to The Indian Express, Tiger Ramesh, CEO, LuxeCamper, said that caravan tourism is very sustainable since even the locals benefit by providing hospitality services to caravan guests by providing food, and enriching them with



It is a comfortable blend of travel, leisure and accommodation. (Representational Picture)

local culture and activities.

Is this the future of travel in India?

Caravans could be the new travel trend, but there are many factors that are affecting the growth of this kind of tourism

in the country. First of all, factors like lack of caravan products to road permits, need improvement to boost caravan tourism in India. A vehicle cannot be converted into a caravan unless the approval comes from the Automotive Research Association of India. According to Tiger Ramesh, caravans should be brought under a single license plate across India with one permit and they should be allowed to ply using a central road tax mechanism, like the GST. Adding to that, Sachin Panchal said that since caravans require huge investment, one needs support from the government in terms of marketing, promotion, subsidies, hybrid caravan parks, and financial support, where India is somewhere lagging behind.

If these hurdles are met, there is no reason why caravans cannot be the future of travel in India. Travellers no longer want to restrict themselves to hotel destinations and thus, creating awareness about the flexible caravans will only bring in more demand and eventually lead to more supply.

Financial Express

Indonesia targets 3.6 million foreign tourists in 2022

By John Legaspi



Foreigners at Ngurah Rai International Airport in Bali Island, Indonesia (Photo: Xinhua/VNA)

Indonesian Tourism and Creative Economy Minister Sandiaga Uno said on March 11, 2022 that he expects around 1.8 to 3.6 million foreign tourists to visit Indonesia this year if the number of COVID-19 cases in the country declines significantly.

In 2019–2021, the number of overseas tourist visitors declined by 9.5 percent due to the pandemic, he noted.

He said he is optimistic that the opening of travel lanes with strict health protocols for foreign tourists through Batam, Bintan, and Bali islands will be enthusiastically welcomed by visitors.

“The implementation of the policy will succeed if we continue imposing disciplined health protocols and optimize the utilization of the PeduliLindungi application,” the minister said.

He further said that tourists from Singapore are very keen to visit Indonesia through the ports in Batam and Bintan islands, which were reopened for foreign visitors on February 25, 2022.

Furthermore, the trial of the COVID-19 pandemic control attempt on tourists visiting Bali Island in February 2022 had been implemented well, he added.

It was proven by the low COVID-19 positivity rate,

which was less than 0.5 percent of the total 1,500 visitors tested at the arrival gate, he pointed out.

Uno said his ministry welcomes the cooperation of all ministries and institutions in preparing for the arrival of delegates for a number of international meetings in Bali, such as the 7th Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GPDRR) and the 2022 G20 Summit.

He assured that the accommodation and services received by the meeting participants met international standards on cleanliness, healthiness, safety, and sustainability.

The COVID-19 Task Force had issued Circular Letter Number 13/2022 regarding Health Protocols for Overseas Travelers Entering from Bali, Batam, and Bintan in the midst of COVID-19 Pandemic on March 8, 2022.

Vietnam Plus

Pandemic stage to become a permanent addition to Melbourne’s cultural scene

By Nick Miller

One of Melbourne theatre’s biggest silver linings to the long, grey pandemic cloud – Malthouse’s summer season Outdoor Stage – is to become a permanent addition to the city’s cultural scene after a multimillion-dollar investment from the state government.

The stage, which sits in the capacious courtyard in



Malthouse Theatre artistic director Matthew Lutton with musicians Rita Satch and Thando who performed at the latest Outdoor Stage summer season. CREDIT: EDDIE JIM



Ash Flanders in SS Metaphor at the Malthouse Outdoor Stage. CREDIT: PIA JOHNSON

Southbank between Malthouse, ACCA and dance company Chunky Move, was a COVID innovation born of necessity: a brainwave that allowed audiences to attend music, comedy and cabaret when indoors theatres were closed or severely capacity-capped. So far it has hosted 25,000 people at 80 events, over two years.

“Our plan with it has always been for it to be a seasonal, ongoing part of the Malthouse experience,” said Malthouse executive director and co-CEO Sarah Neal.

“Aside from the COVID stuff, it’s just a great space, and it allows us to be able to do a lot of additional programming, to bring in different artists that we wouldn’t necessarily get the opportunity to work with – as well as partnering with festivals like Yirramboi and Midsumma.

“It really expands the experience.”

The stage first came about when, in the winter of 2020, the company realised it had to rule out a traditional indoors season for the foreseeable future – and Melbourne didn’t have a mid-scale outdoor venue that could be programmed for audiences to attend in a COVID-safe way.

Around \$300,000 to build a prototype came from the Sidney Myer Fund, which quickly mobilised to help artists whose livelihoods were erased by the pandemic, with quick-response \$1000 grants to cover food, rent and bills, and long-term projects to help the industry recover from its body-blow.

The federal government’s RISE arts rescue fund – now drawing to a close – supported programming for the venue’s initial years.

The new money from the Victorian government will upgrade the current venue with proper stage footings, a resurfaced courtyard, more accessible toilets, a green room for artists and (if planning laws permit) a reconfiguration of the theatre’s indoor bar to serve the courtyard as well.

Some of the \$4.3 million will go towards a new roof for the Malthouse proper: “Every time it rains here we have to run around with buckets,” Neal said. The building has had little substantial work since it opened in the 1990s.

Neal hopes the work can be completed in time for a relaunch “with a bang” in January 2023.

They are fundraising to support next summer’s program: the Outdoor Stage will still serve up comedy, cabaret and music, and Neal expects precinct neighbours ACCA and Chunky Move to also use it.

“And we’ll definitely be looking at other ways to utilise the space, for different forms of work that artists create specifically for that courtyard and that stage.”

Arts Minister Danny Pearson said the upgrades would “make an amazing space even better” for both Victorians and tourists to “Australia’s cultural capital”.

The Age

Corporate Travel says business trips in and from New Zealand are coming back - gradually

By Grant Bradley

Kiwi business travellers are dipping their feet in international trips and it’s a matter of “when not if” they return in big numbers, says Keeley Alton, general manager of Corporate Traveller.

The Flight Centre group business has seen some cautious growth already since isolation requirements were dropped for returning New Zealanders and further relaxation of border rules would mean more flights and help boost confidence to

travel internationally.

The Omicron outbreak had hammered domestic travel but Alton says that as the wave passes, corporate travel is gradually coming back around the country. Domestic business bookings are about 80 per cent of Corporate Traveller’s business and had been strong last year whenever there was little Covid-19 in the community.

She said international volumes were around 20 per cent to 30 per cent of

what they were pre-pandemic but there were signs of a strong recovery.

Travel agents suffered badly when the pandemic hit but stand to do well out of the recovery as more complications around global travelling mean more businesses, small ones in particular, are using consultants to organise their trips.

DIY travel is getting harder and can cost much more in the long run, said Alton.



Keeley Alton, general manager Corporate Traveller. Photo / Dean Purcell.

“We’re talking (to them) about how important duty of care and compliance is when you’re sending your employees overseas. It is not simple to book an international trip anymore - using a travel management company can help you facilitate that and to maximise the dollars.”

She said entry requirements and vaccination rules were changing almost daily.

While changes already in place and coming to New Zealand were “100 per cent better than MIQ”, there were still some impediments to travel - and confidence has been dented.

While many countries are scrapping requirements for pre-departure tests for entry, they were still in place for New Zealand.

For some firms sending their staff overseas that means a short trip of four days could grow to around 14 if they have a positive Covid test.

“Quite a lot of travel to the US and Europe where those restrictions are lifting takes the pain out of the outbound journey but there can be inbound complication to come home,” said Alton.

When Australia announced in late March 2022 that it would drop the pre-entry testing requirement, there was an immediate bump in trans-tasman activity.

Corporate Traveller consultants say customers want to see consistency in this country.

“They want to see continuity for a few months with the Government not snap shutting the borders again and actually standing by their plan to open up the world.”

The shortage of airline capacity to this country had pushed up fares but those travelling now were not price-conscious, she said. They’re booking fully flexible fares and prepared to pay extra for premium seats where there is more comfort which will be welcomed by airlines whose business class cabins can be highly profitable - when full.

Small and medium enterprise (SME) customers who may have previously done two or three trips a year are rolling travel into one longer journey with multiple stops.

“We’re not sure if that’s a trend that will continue but there’s that pent-up demand out there.”

Sports teams and athletes travelling to events overseas had been quick out of the blocks while government travel had been slower to get going as organisations work out travel policies.

Alton said with airline capacity set to increase in coming months as border restrictions ease and tourists return, the corporate travel rebound is expected to further accelerate.

“As airline capacity increases and flight prices become

more competitive, more New Zealand companies will be jumping at the chance to take their business to the world.”

Pre-pandemic 29 international airlines operated at Auckland Airport, connecting to 45 destinations. As at the end of March 2022, 14 airlines fly internationally to 25 destinations. Several have indicated they will return and last week Latam resumed flights between Santiago, Chile and Sydney which call at Auckland.

Alton expects bleisure - combining work trips with leisure travel - to continue to grow strongly as business people take their overseas-travel-starved families overseas.

Overseas, optimism about corporate travel is returning strongly, particularly in the United States. A survey of 460 businesses by the Global Business Travel Association in February found three in four (78 per cent) of supplier and travel management company (TMC) professionals surveyed felt optimistic about the business travel industry’s path to recovery, up from 54 per cent who reported being optimistic in the January poll.

The percentage of respondents who report non-essential domestic business travel is sometimes or usually allowed increased to 73 per cent in February 2022, compared to 66 per cent in January 2022.

And among those surveyed, most (68 per cent) anticipate they will want to travel about the same amount or more as they did before the pandemic in the future. An additional third (30 per cent) say they want to travel “somewhat or much less” than they did before the pandemic.

On average, travel buyers in the US say their company’s business travel bookings are at 33 per cent of their pre-pandemic level, while travel suppliers report their business travel bookings are back to 42 per cent compared with pre-pandemic levels.

NZ Herald

Göbeklitepe to draw more tourists on European Cultural Route

By Anadolu Agency

Göbeklitepe, an archaeological wonder from Turkey’s southeastern city of Şanlıurfa, will attract more foreign visitors now with its inclusion on the European Route of Megalithic Culture, which brings together monuments of similar categories in European countries.

Crowned as the world’s first temple, the prehistoric site of Göbeklitepe is the oldest temple site in human history and one of the most important discoveries for Neolithic research.

The famed ancient site was discovered in 1963 when researchers from Istanbul and Chicago universities were working at the site. In joint works at the site since 1995, the German Archaeological Institute and Şanlıurfa Museum found T-shaped obelisks from the Neolithic era towering 3 to 6 meters (10 to 20 feet) high and weighing 40-60 tons. During excavations, diverse 12,000-year-old artifacts such as human statuettes 65 centimeters (26 inches) high were also unearthed.

Göbeklitepe, which grows in reputation every year,

was placed on UNESCO (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) World Heritage Tentative List in 2011 and was included on the World Heritage List at the 42nd World Heritage Committee meeting held in Bahrain on July 1, 2018. This title boosted the worldwide recognition of the site.

Mehmet Uncu, the manager of Şanlıurfa Tourism Development Inc. – which was established with the cooperation of the Şanlıurfa Governorship, Municipality and Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism, informed Anadolu Agency (AA) that they applied for the inclusion of Göbeklitepe for the European Route of Megalithic Culture in 2020 under the coordination of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

Uncu stated that the route, which was created based on the importance and characteristics of huge historical sites, provides an opportunity for better promotion of the spots.



A view from Göbeklitepe, Şanlıurfa, southeastern Turkey, April 28, 2022. (AA Photo)

Emphasizing that only Göbeklitepe is the route from Turkey, the manager continued: “Göbeklitepe was included in the European Route of Megalithic Culture, which was established in 2012. This route means more qualified and more foreign visitors for us. The route includes megalithic structures that attract many visitors around the world, such as the historical monument Stonehenge in Britain. Ten countries, including Germany, Spain, England, Denmark and Italy, are also included on this route, and Göbeklitepe was the first area to enter it from Turkey.”

With the participation of Turkey, the general assembly of the European Route of Megalithic Culture would be held in Germany on April 28. Twenty-five representatives from the participant countries will plan joint activities to be held in the upcoming years.

Daily Sabah

Bangladesh among top 10 destinations for tourism recovery in Asia Pacific: Report

Asia's travel readiness index

(0-10; lower score indicates more favourable conditions for tourism recovery)

Economy	Final score	Vaccination	Ease of travel	Convenience of returning home
Fiji	1.95	2.50	0.83	3.10
Sri Lanka	2.15	1.68	0.43	4.65
Malaysia	2.15	1.68	1.68	3.05
Maldives	2.20	1.68	0.00	5.35
Singapore	2.45	0.00	0.83	5.95
Australia	2.55	0.83	0.83	5.75
Bangladesh	2.85	8.33	2.08	0.70
New Zealand	2.98	0.00	3.75	3.65
Nepal	3.23	5.00	1.25	4.75
Cambodia	3.25	2.50	0.83	6.80
Thailand	3.30	2.50	1.25	6.40
India	3.33	4.18	1.68	4.95
Philippines	3.75	5.83	1.25	5.80
Papua New Guinea	3.78	8.33	1.68	3.85
Indonesia	4.05	6.68	1.68	5.65

Bangladesh is among the top 10 destinations in Asia Pacific best positioned for tourism recovery, according to the Economist Intelligence Unit's Travel-ready index 2022.

The index measures 28 Asian economies based on the favourability of tourism conditions such as local vaccination coverage, ease of travel, and the convenience of returning home. A lower score indicates more favorable conditions for tourism recovery.

Fiji, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, and

the Maldives are the best destinations in the index for reviving their respective pandemic-wrecked tourism industries, while Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, Nepal, and Cambodia round out the top ten.

Bangladesh is seventh on the list and has a final score of 2.85 out of 10 in the index, putting it behind Fiji (1.95), Sri Lanka (2.15), Malaysia (2.15), Maldives (2.2), Singapore (2.45), and Australia (2.55).

According to the EIU, the index's top performers have all eased visa and

entry restrictions since 2021 or earlier.

The EIU said in a report released on April 21 that, “A combination of broader and more effective vaccination coverage and greater reliance on tourism have lent themselves to less restrictive travel policies.”

According to the report, Hong Kong, on the other hand, has the worst prospects due to its restrictive border policies.

Following Hong Kong, Brunei, Bhutan, Taiwan, Samoa, Vanuatu, Japan, China, and Laos are the countries with the least favorable tourism recovery conditions, according to the index.

Northeast Asian economies, which are less reliant on tourism, have taken longer to reopen, according to the report, which predicts that China and its territories of Hong Kong and Macau will maintain strict ‘dynamic zero Covid’ policies at least until 2022.

Thailand, India, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, Vietnam, Mongolia, and South Korea were all ranked in the middle of the table in terms of tourism recovery.

The Daily Star

China Airlines operates sustainability flight amid global challenge

By Wang Shu-fen and Lee Hsin-Yin

Taiwan-based China Airlines (CAL) on May 4, 2022 operated a flight from Taipei to Singapore to show its commitment to sustainable development, as part of a global challenge launched by SkyTeam, one of the world's three largest airline alliances.

Flight CI-753 featured up to 100 environmental and carbon reduction initiatives, including fuel-efficiency route planning, apron operations, online check-in, and in-flight catering and amenities, the SkyTeam member said in a press release.

CAL said the 4-hour-and-35-minute flight was selected to represent it in "The Sustainable Flight Challenge" of SkyTeam, which asked 17 participating airlines to find the most sustainable way to operate one single flight in their existing networks.

Winners of the challenge will be offered an award, according to organizers.

The carrier said the route for the demonstration flight optimized the altitude to improve fuel efficiency, while cabin amenities were made from recycled materials, including travel



Photo courtesy of China Airlines

kits produced from discarded life jackets.

The food on board the flight was sourced mostly from local and seasonal Taiwanese ingredients in order to reduce carbon emissions of food's life cycle, the airline said, adding that precision food preparation and supply were also enforced to avoid waste.

CAL said it also involved passengers in the challenge by offering incentives such as a rebate of up to 800 miles, 40 percent higher than standard mileage rewards.

The carrier said that for instance, to get the rebate, passengers were asked to pre-order in-flight meals, use self-service check-in, fill out the electronic health declaration form, as well as carry their own eco-friendly cutlery.

CAL said relative initiatives will be progressively rolled out where practical in the future, amid its efforts to reduce carbon emissions and to reach the goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, through strategies such as fleet renewal and reduction of weight of aircraft.

Focus Taiwan

UN meets to help reverse 'precipitous drop' in tourism



UN News/Elizabeth Scaffidi, Photographing the Vermilion Cliffs while touring Arizona, United States.



UN News/Elizabeth Scaffidi, Via rickshaw, tourists explore the historical Chandni Chowk market in Delhi, India.

As part of the "long journey" to recover from the ravages of COVID-19, UN General Assembly President Abdulla Shahid highlighted on May 4, 2022 the need to build a more sustainable, resilient, and responsible global tourism sector.

The COVID-19 pandemic ground the entire tourism sector to a halt, dealing a "devastating blow to the global economy," he told the first-ever High-Level Thematic Debate on Sustainable Tourism.

"In 2019, prior to the pandemic, tourism contributed \$3.5 trillion to global GDP. The precipitous drop during the pandemic is estimated to have cost up to 120 million jobs".

Communal role

Though easy to sum up the devastation in numbers, capturing the overall toll on people, communities and services, is much harder, particularly for many small island States and least

developed countries, which remain heavily reliant on tourism to fuel public spending.

Looking beyond the numbers, tourism plays a deeply human role: “Travel and tourism connect and unite us...builds bridges and facilitates inter-cultural exchanges...[and] fosters peace and solidarity across continents and borders,” said Mr. Shahid.

Creative tourism

From “travel bubbles” to digital tours, vaccine passports and “resilient corridors”, imaginative efforts were made to help tourism weather two years of COVID.

“As the pandemic wanes, the tourism sector is rebounding”, he said, speaking to “the human need to connect, to explore, to experience”.

“However, as it rebounds, it is important that we reflect on its future direction”.

Challenges ahead

While acknowledging the economic importance of tourism, the Assembly president warned that we must also contend with the harm it inflicts on the planet, such as carbon emissions; oceans brimming with plastics; and the human toll on ecosystems and wildlife.

“We know that many of the communities and historic sites around the world that are beloved by tourists are climate and disaster prone and need support to build resilience,” he added.

According to the UN Environment Programme’s Green Economy Report, a ‘business-as-usual’ scenario predicts that by 2050, tourism will generate an increase of 154 per cent in energy consumption, for the sector, 131 per cent in greenhouse gas emissions, 152 per cent in water consumption, and 251 per cent in solid waste disposal.

“We cannot allow this to continue. We must not reboot global tourism in a business-as-usual manner, we must be more ambitious than that, more responsible than that,” underscored Mr. Shahid.

‘Time for bold action’

Throughout the discussions, the UN official encouraged participants to address their commitments under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and enhance the inclusion and empowerment of women, youth, indigenous and other marginalized communities.

“Today, I call on all stakeholders to seize every opportunity to transform the tourism sector, and to target a more sustainable, inclusive and responsible approach,” he said.

“Now is the time for bold action and all ideas are welcome”.

Invest in tourism

World Tourism Organization (WTO) chief Zurab Pololikashvili noted that the current energy crisis contributes to the vulnerability of the tourism sector, while maintaining that investments in tourism are also investments in peace.

He said tourism was particularly important to the livelihoods of women, youth and rural communities, and championed the need for a fresh, sustainable balance between

the short-term demands of tourists and the longer-term needs of communities.

The WTO official stressed that tourism can drive positive change, and lauded the diverse sectors that have participated in the “landmark” conversation about sustainability.

Supporting the sector

The Director of the World Bank’s Urban, Disaster Risk Management, Resilience and Land Global Practice, Sameh Wahba, spoke of inclusive, resilient sustainable cities and communities.

He said that as tourism employs 10 per cent of the global workforce, it offers important opportunities for women, rural communities and small businesses.

Mr. Wahba advocated support for nations to promote sustainable tourism to benefit poor communities and preserve culture, heritage and the environment.

Assisting the SDGs

Deputy UN chief Amina Mohammed observed that “tourism is in turmoil,” largely from the COVID pandemic, but also from conflict settings, including Ukraine.

Insisting that sustainability remain at the core of tourism, she advocated for the sector to be transformed into a positive force in implementing the SDGs.

UN News

UAE’s Emirates signs MoU with Sri Lanka Tourism

By Varun Godinho



Since Sri Lanka re-opened to international tourists in February 2021, Emirates has carried more than 80,000 passengers to Colombo

Dubai-based carrier Emirates has signed an MoU with the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau to help revive the South East Asian country’s trade and tourism industry.

Under the agreement, Emirates and Sri Lanka Tourism will benefit from joint activities to enhance trade and tourism, including trade shows, trade familiarisation trips, exhibitions, and workshops.

Since Sri Lanka re-opened to international tourists in

February 2021, Emirates has carried more than 80,000 passengers to Colombo. The top inbound markets include UAE, Italy, UK and Germany.

Emirates currently operates 28 weekly flights to Colombo and is the only international carrier to serve the country with First Class services. Emirates has restarted operations to over 120 destinations within its global network.

“Sri Lanka remains a very key market in Emirates’ global network and the agreement signed today underscores our unwavering commitment to the country. We launched operations to Colombo more than 35 years ago, and our partnership continues to grow from strength to strength,” said Ahmed Khoory, SVP Commercial West Asia and Indian Ocean at Emirates.

Kimarli Fernando, chairperson Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau, added: “This partnership is crucial for us to explore and capitalise opportunities that emerge and to open up many beautiful avenues to establish brand awareness and perceived quality in the global tourism market.”



Apart from Sri Lanka, Emirates has signed MoUs with several other global tourism boards earlier this year. In February 2022, it signed an Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) with the Tourism Authority of Thailand, a country that Emirates has been flying to for around three decades.

Emirates also signed an MoU with Saudi Tourism Authority (STA) to boost inbound tourism into the kingdom. The airline already has four gateways into the kingdom: Riyadh, Jeddah, Dammam and Madinah.

Meanwhile the Dubai airline also recently signed another MoU with Turespaña, Spanish Tourism Institute to boost trade and tourism to Spain. Emirates launched operations to Madrid in 2010, to Barcelona in 2012 and Dubai to Mexico City, via Barcelona in 2019. The airline currently offers customers 10 weekly flights to Barcelona, including 5 weekly flights from Dubai to Mexico City via Barcelona, and 9 weekly flights to Madrid utilising the iconic Emirates A380 aircraft.

Gulf Business

About CACCI

The Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CACCI) is a regional grouping of apex national chambers of commerce and industry, business associations and business enterprises in Asia and the Western Pacific.

It is a non-governmental organization (NGO) serving as a forum for promoting the vital role of businessmen in the region, increasing regional business interaction, and enhancing regional economic growth. Since its establishment in 1996, CACCI has grown into a network of national chambers of commerce with a total now of 27 Primary Members from 25 Asian countries and independent economies. It cuts across national boundaries to link businessmen and promote economic growth throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

As an NGO, CACCI is granted consultative status, Roster category, under the United Nations. It is a member of the Conference on NGOs (CoNGO), an association of NGOs with UN consultative status.

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