

TTCG THE OFFICIAL **Show Daily**



Issue

3



ATF 2016

January 21, 2016
Manila, Philippines



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JANUARY - MARCH

- 11 - 16 January 2016 | Royal Langkawi Yacht Club, Langkawi
14TH ROYAL LANGKAWI INTERNATIONAL REGATTA
- 20 February 2016 | Ipoh, Perak
MALAYSIA CHINESE NEW YEAR OPEN HOUSE CELEBRATION
- 23 - 28 February 2016 | Bukit Layang-Layang, Pasir Gudang, Johor
FESTIVAL LAYANG-LAYANG SEDUNIA PASIR GUDANG 2016 (WORLD KITE FESTIVAL)
- February / March 2016 | Kuala Lumpur
NATIONAL CRAFT DAY 2016
- 11 - 13 March 2016 | Millennium Monument, Precinct 2, Putrajaya
8TH PUTRAJAYA INTERNATIONAL HOT AIR BALLOON FIESTA 2016
- 25 - 27 March 2016 | SPICE Arena, Penang
DISNEY ON ICE MAGICAL ICE FESTIVAL



APRIL - JUNE

- 1 - 3 April 2016 | Pantai Cenang, Langkawi
MALAYSIA WATER FESTIVAL (PESTA AIR LANGKAWI)
- 23 April 2016 | MATIC, Kuala Lumpur
VAISAKHI CELEBRATION



JULY - SEPTEMBER

- 7 July 2016 | George Town, Penang
GEORGE TOWN WORLD HERITAGE DAY
- 16 July - 16 September 2016 | National Museum, Kuala Lumpur
NATIONAL DAY EXHIBITION 2016
- 17 July 2016 | Melaka
MALAYSIA AIDILFITRI OPEN HOUSE CELEBRATION
- 29 - 31 July 2016 | Dataran Merdeka, Kuala Lumpur
KL BIG KITCHEN 2016
- 30 July 2016 | Banda Hilir, Melaka
8TH ANNIVERSARY OF UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE CITY CELEBRATION
- July 2016 | Kota Kinabalu, Sabah
SABAH INTERNATIONAL FOLKLORE FESTIVAL
- July 2016 | Spice Arena, Penang
PENANG MITM TRAVEL FAIR
- 3 - 31 August 2016 | Penang
PENANG HUNGRY GHOST FESTIVAL
- 4 August - 15 August 2016 | Royal Museum, Kuala Lumpur
YANG DI-PERTUAN AGONG EXHIBITION
- 5 - 7 August 2016 | Sarawak Cultural Village (SCV) Kuching, Sarawak
RAINFOREST WORLD MUSIC FESTIVAL

- 12 - 14 August 2016 | Kuala Lumpur
KL CITY RACE
- 19 - 21 August 2016 | Esplanade, KLCC Park, Kuala Lumpur
MALAYSIA INTERNATIONAL MASK FESTIVAL
- August 2016 | Pavilion Kuala Lumpur
KUALA LUMPUR FASHION WEEK, READY TO WEAR
- 1 - 30 September 2016 | Johor Bahru, Johor
JB ARTS FESTIVAL 2016
- 11 September 2016 | Kuala Lumpur
KL INTERNATIONAL MARATHON
- 15 September - 31 December 2016 | National Textile Museum
ASEAN SONGKET WEAVING EXHIBITION
- 15 - 17 September 2016 | Rainforest Discovery Center, Sandakan, Sabah
BORNEO BIRD FESTIVAL/RACE
- 24 September 2016 | Kuala Lumpur
KUALA LUMPUR FABULOUS FOOD HUNT 2016
- 24 September - 2 October 2016 | Panasonic National Sports Centre, Kuala Lumpur
MALAYSIA OPEN KUALA LUMPUR 2016 ATP 250
- 30 September - 2 October 2016 | Sepang International Circuit, Selangor
F1 PETRONAS MALAYSIA GRAND PRIX

29 April - 1 May 2016 | Labuan International Sea Sport Complex, Labuan
MALAYSIA WATER FESTIVAL (PESTA AIR LABUAN)

April 2016 | Pulau Perhentian, Redang, Setiu, Kuala Terengganu, Terengganu
TERENGGANU INTERNATIONAL CANDAT SOTONG FESTIVAL

April 2016 | Kuala Lumpur
MALAYSIA INTERNATIONAL SHOE FESTIVAL

13 - 14 May 2016 | ParkCity Everly Hotel, Miri, Sarawak
BORNEO JAZZ FESTIVAL

14 May 2016 | Dataran Merdeka, Kuala Lumpur
CITRAWARNA

14 May 2016 | Sandakan, Sabah
MALAYSIA TADAU KA'AMATAN OPEN HOUSE CELEBRATION

27 May - 4 June 2016 | Putrajaya
MAGIC OF THE NIGHT

27 May - 4 June 2016 | Anjung Floria, Precinct 4, Putrajaya
FLORIA DIRAJA PUTRAJAYA

2 June 2016 | Sibul, Sarawak
MALAYSIA HARI GAWAI OPEN HOUSE CELEBRATION

11, 12, 18, 19, 25 & 26 June 2016 | Jalan Raja / Merdeka Square, KL
IFTAR@KL

22 - 24 June 2016 | i-City, Shah Alam, Selangor
SELANGOR HOMESTAY FESTIVAL

27 June - 31 August 2016 | Throughout Malaysia
1MALAYSIA MEGA SALE SHOPPING CARNIVAL

29 - 31 June 2016 | Fraser's Hill, Raub, Pahang
FRASER'S HILL INTERNATIONAL BIRD RACE

June - July 2016 | Anjung Indah, Balik Pulau, Penang
PENANG DURIAN FESTIVAL



OCTOBER - DECEMBER

15 - 16 October 2016 | Kota Kinabalu, Sabah
30TH MT. KINABALU INTERNATIONAL CLIMBATHON - ADVENTURE

21 - 23 October 2016 | Titiwangsa Lake Gardens, Kuala Lumpur
INTERNATIONAL ABORIGINES ARTS FESTIVAL

27 - 30 October 2016 | Kompleks Perbadanan Putrajaya & Dataran Putrajaya, Precinct 3, Putrajaya

PUTRAJAYA INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC ARTS AND CULTURE FESTIVAL (PIACUF)

28 - 30 October 2016 | Sepang International Circuit, Selangor
MOTOGP

October 2016 | Kuala Lumpur

MALAYSIA INTERNATIONAL GOURMET FESTIVAL (MIGF) 2016

October 2016 | Malaysian-German Society, Penang
OKTOBERFEST

October 2016 | Surf Beach, Sunway Lagoon, Selangor
RETROFEST ASIA 2016

October 2016 | Yayasan Sime Darby, Kuala Lumpur
SIME DARBY LPGA MALAYSIA 2016

October 2016 | Kuala Lumpur
CIMB CLASSIC 2016

5 November 2016 | Kluang, Johor
MALAYSIA DEEPAVALI OPEN HOUSE CELEBRATION

14 November 2016 - 3 January 2017 | Throughout Malaysia
1MALAYSIA YEAR END SALE

18 - 25 November 2016 | Starhill Gallery, Kuala Lumpur
A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME X BY STARHILL GALLERY

25 December 2016 | Kuala Lumpur
MALAYSIA CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE CELEBRATION

December 2016 | Kiblat Walk, a section of Persiaran Perdana and Dataran Putrajaya, Precinct 3, Putrajaya
LIGHT AND MOTION PUTRAJAYA (LAMPU)

Throughout 2016 | Panggung Bandaraya, Kuala Lumpur
MUD STORY OF KUALA LUMPUR

April - December 2016 | Lake Putrajaya, Putrajaya
SKYRIDE FESTIVAL PARK

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An aerial photograph of a rugged coastline. A river flows through a deep, rocky canyon on the left. The right side shows a steep, rocky cliffside meeting the sea. Numerous birds, likely terns, are seen in flight over the water and perched on the rocks. In the bottom right corner, a colorful, traditional structure is visible. The overall scene is dramatic and scenic.

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ATF 2016
January 21, 2016
Manila, Philippines



There's no stopping the Chinese traveller

Travel budgets are not shrinking, wanderlust remains strong

By Lee Pei Qi and S Puvaneswary

CHINA'S stock markets may have crashed dramatically twice in the first week of 2016 and its economy showing continued signs of weakness, but Chinese nationals are proving to be a resilient lot when it comes to travel consumption.

Wang Suqi, president of Total Travel International Travel Service in Beijing, said that the weakened Chinese yuan was hardly an issue.

"I do not see any impact on travel because the Chinese are very rich. They will continue to travel and spend money," Wang said.

Tony Li, managing director of Beijing-based Deluxe MICE Tour and Luxury Travel, shares the same observation: "There are many first-time travellers in China and they are all eager to see the world. Their concern isn't about the cost because they can afford it, rather they are worried about the safety and security of the destination."

As a result, Singapore is a popular choice among Li's travellers.

According to Li, at least 50 per cent of his travellers favour South-east Asian destinations like Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines.

"One of the good things about these countries is the climate. The Chinese like to travel to warm countries especially during winter," he said.

Ding Hai Yang, general manager of Suzhou CITS, has also noticed Chinese travellers' preference for Asia.

"Asia is considered safe and comfortable for the Chinese and its close proximity is attractive too," Ding reasoned.

"Chinese outbound (volume) has been growing so much and I foresee it will continue to rise even more," he said, brushing off any threats to travel demand posed by the depreciating Chinese yuan.

Maintaining the continued thirst for travel among the Chinese is a plethora of travel deals targeting the market, said Xu Jili, general manager of strategy development department of MICE projects with Silvermoon Advertising Beijing.

"In fact, if the Chinese were to travel within (China), it might be more expensive than going to a country in South-east Asia," Xu said.

According to both Wang and Xu, the liberalisation of tourist visas for the Chinese in recent

years has been a huge contributing factor to the growing outbound volume as Chinese travellers value convenience.

Sellers interviewed at ATF 2016 have also reported resilience in Chinese bookings and spend.

Hannah Paula Yulo, director of sales & marketing at Paradise Garden Resort Hotel & Convention Center in Boracay, Philippines, told the *Daily*: "Our 292-room property is fully booked for the Chinese New Year holiday period, mostly by Chinese tourists. Still, we have inbound agents handling the Chinese market requesting for more rooms.

"The market is still healthy. We have forward bookings right up to September and we have not seen a drop in Chinese tourist spend."

Mint Leong, managing director of Sunflower Holidays whose company specialises in the Chinese inbound market to Malaysia, has seen a 30 per cent year-on-year increase in Chinese arrivals from 2014 to 2015.

She intends to intensify her marketing and promotional efforts to secondary Chinese destinations that have new air links deeper into Malaysia such as Langkawi and Kota Kinabalu.

New services soon to be introduced include AirAsia's daily Kota Kinabalu-Wuhan flights from January 22 and Langkawi-Guangzhou two days after.

She said: "The Chinese economy may have slowed down, but the disposable income of middle and upper class travellers have not been impacted."



Li: not concerned about cost



Wang: visa liberalisation has helped

NUMBERS THAT MATTER

15.5 The number of international visitor arrivals, in million, expected for Singapore in 2015, representing a three per cent increase from 15.1 million in 2014

32 The number of international tourist arrivals, in million, projected to visit Thailand in 2016, after nearly 30 million foreigners visited the country last year

70,666 The number of airline seats between China and Malaysia each week. Weekly flight frequency between the two countries is 333

11.6 The percentage increase in tourist arrivals recorded by the Philippines between January to October 2015, compared with the same period in the year before

Single visa more benefits than risks: PATA CEO

By Rosa Ocampo

RECENT security tensions are not helping the discussion in moving forward the ASEAN single visa scheme, but PATA CEO Mario Hardy maintains his support for it, saying the economic and social benefits of such a move far outweigh the security risk.

PATA, together with WTTC, UNWTO and five other international bodies, are of one mind in wanting the world to be visa-free, for everyone to be able to travel with ease.

Saying that the absence of an ASEAN common visa is the "one of the greatest barriers to tourism", Hardy remarked that the region's tourism would have grown much more should tourists from outside of South-east Asia be allowed to travel here on a single visa similar to Schengen.

European travellers, for instance, want to explore multiple destinations here – not just a single country – but the complexity of multiple visa requirements is a deterrent.

A single visa scheme does not mean no visa at all, Hardy pointed out, because technology can be harnessed for an e-visa facility which is "alright to implement" and will not make it difficult for people to travel.

Hardy acknowledges that it is not the tourism office that makes the decision but the immigration and other government offices.

And as the influence of the tourism sector rises, "what we're hoping to do is to offer and provide tools and enough information to tourism ministers so they can share that and put pressure on their governments" to accede to the single visa scheme.

He believes the ASEAN single visa scheme will happen but is unsure when. In the mean time, bilateral agreements on a single visa scheme between countries can provide temporary relief.

The usual dilemma against the single visa scheme is security concerns and immigration laws, the question of who will control and who to trust.



What we are hoping to do is to offer and provide tools and enough information to tourism ministers so they can share that and put pressure on their governments.

Mario Hardy
PATA CEO

But Hardy reiterates that the benefits of having a simplified visa facility are huge. For example, Vietnam saw its arrivals improve when visa restrictions were eased.

He also expressed admiration for Indonesia which had unilaterally opened its doors to more foreign nationals.

ASEANTA to develop Visit ASEAN@50 offers

By Rosa Ocampo

ASEAN NTOs have asked ASEANTA to take on the responsibility of creating special offers and value added tours and packages for the Visit ASEAN@50 promotions in 2017.

The region's tourism boards believe that ASEANTA members, who are travel agencies, tour operators, hotels and airlines, can

bring their expertise into this area and market the region as a single destination.

ASEANTA president Aileen Clemente said the planned tour packages should promote South-east Asia as a single destination, not the individual member countries.

She said that six airlines had turned up for ASEANTA's meet-

ing this week in a show of full support for Visit ASEAN@50, unlike before when there were only one or two in attendance.

Cebu Pacific has for the first time attended ASEANTA's quarterly meeting although it is not yet a member. Member airlines who attended were Singapore Airlines, Thai Airways, Philippine Airlines and AirAsia.

News

Travel to Indonesia kept calm and carried on

Trade response to Jakarta's terror attack largely muted, demand remains for Bali

By Mimi Hudoyo, S Puvaneswary and Paige Lee Pei Qi

THE recent terrorist bombing in Jakarta appears to have marginal impact on travel sentiments to Indonesia, if going by the muted reaction of international buyers at ATF 2016 to the tragic event.

S Rajan, president & CEO of US-based Air Safety Equipment, sees no impact on his company's business travel to Jakarta. "We are organising a Boeing aircraft equipment product launch in Jakarta in September 2016 and there have not been any concern from participants regarding their safety and well-being in the destination."

Likewise, Muhamad Zaki, president of RZ Travels US, has not received any cancellations. "Terrorism does not stop people from travelling," he said. "Our clients still travel as we all realise that there are risks everywhere you go."

Iris Bloedorn-Millotou of Sunhotels Group and Incentive Travel Spain concurred: "I think nowadays people realise

(terrorism) could happen anywhere. People do not want to be intimidated.

Even though tourism matters less to Jakarta, other destinations in Indonesia have not been much affected too.

"We are not doing much of Jakarta but even bookings for Bali are still the same with no drop," noted Bloedorn-Millotou. Daily updates from her Indonesian tour operator partners were "a relief" and kept her abreast of the ground situation in Jakarta.

Eric Sinnaya, managing director of Morahols Travel Malaysia said the Jakarta attacks had not caused a slowdown to holiday destinations in Indonesia such as Medan and Bukit Lawang, in North Sumatera, which is also the gateway to Leuser National Park.

Tim Lim, general manager of Australia-based EC Travel: "Our clients usually go to Bali and not Jakarta but they will definitely still be more cautious.

I will emphasise the importance of getting insurance to protect them."

Jonathan Tran, executive director of Lac Hong Voyages in Vietnam, has not received any cancellations for Bali and still have several groups of 20 to 30 pax visiting the destination during the coming Lunar New Year period.



Tran: safety and security concerns

"There is definitely worry from our travellers, even though they are going to Bali because it is the same country (as Jakarta)," he commented. "As travel agents, what we are doing now is to assure them of the safety and security in Bali so they are less worried about the situation."

However, the January bombing has caused anxiety for a group of 12 from the US which had cancelled the Jakarta portion from their culinary and leisure tour originally planned for Jakarta, Bali and Komodo Island.

"As a result, the itinerary has been reduced from two weeks to 10 days," said Cheryl Yamashita, vice president of Washington-based Ampac Tours.

Reza Novaldy, director of Tama Tour Indonesia, has received concerns from a 1,500 pax incentive group from the US intending to visit Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Bandung and Bali in the coming months. He said: "We will have to tell them what the ground situation is because they are feeling very uncertain."

There could be broader implications on long-term travel demand for the region, as Jay Serrano, general manager of US-based JJB Travel, foresees a 20 per cent decline in travel demand to Indonesia and South-east Asia.

Malaysia's IMR Group director, BP Tan, said: "There used to be more concern about the crime and accident rate when we conduct a risk assessment about a country, but now we have to also take into consideration terrorism."

HanaTour develops localised booking apps

By Dannon Har

SOUTH Korea's leading travel company HanaTour is developing localised versions of its smartphone apps for South-east Asian travellers, in order to drive more bookings from this region.

South-east Asia is both a major outbound destination and source market for the company.

While HanaTour's websites in the various South-east Asian markets are already localised, the company wants to do more to facilitate usage among a bur-

geoning number of smartphone natives in the region, according to Dong-Joon Song, global hotel team staff at HanaTour.

"More than 60 per cent of bookings from South Korea last year were made through our mobile app so it is very important to have international versions as well," he explained.

While the future smartphone apps for South-east Asia will allow users to purchase tours, flight tickets and hotel rooms, Sang-Yoon Park, hotel general team's general manager at HanaTour, said he intends to first build up hotel inventory in the region. Big hotel chains with a strong brand presence, such as AccorHotels and Best Western, are top priority for him.

He believes it is easier to begin forming packages by starting with hotels.

Song is hoping to work with "technology companies already connected with and selling hotels" in order to expand distribution channels.

"We are also trying to provide room inventory by partnering with hotels here," he added.

The applications are currently in development but a launch date has yet been set.



Sofitel Manila's got talent

ASEAN tourism leaders were in for an aural treat at the Philippine Department of Tourism-hosted lunch yesterday. The venue, Hotel Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila, brought on stage its talented interns who serenaded guests most tenderly

Conrad Manila expects to do well with MICE crowd

By Rosa Ocampo

THE 347-key Conrad Manila expects to generate a "pretty substantial" one-third of business from MICE when it opens in March or April, said its general manager Harald Feurstein.

Business events will come naturally for the luxury hotel as it will be connected by footbridges to SMX Convention Center in the convention and exhibition hub within the Manila Bay area.

Feurstein said the facilities are complementary.

With the hotel's proximity to the Arena sports and entertain-

ment venue and Manila's business centres and tourist attractions, as well as its two levels of upscale retail shops within, Conrad Manila is also expected to draw "other market segments".

Feurstein remarked: "We can be all things – MICE, leisure and business (travel). We're a little bit of everything but we're really good in all of that."

Conrad Manila will satisfy the need for a business-friendly luxury address in the Manila Bay area, which currently offers five-star hotels in the integrated resorts of Solaire and City of

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IN BRIEF

All smiles to Siem Reap

THAI Smile Airways will begin five weekly flights from Suvarnabhumi Airport to Siem Reap from February 1 using Airbus A320 aircraft with 174 seats.

Hua Hin gets So luxurious

SO SOFITEL Hua Hin will open along Cha-am beach next month, offering 77 rooms including six pool villas, an adult-only Solarium Pool, dining venues and event spaces.

Kata renames Samui resort

KATA Group Resorts has rebranded its Kandaburi Resort and Spa to Novotel Samui Resort Chaweng Beach Kandaburi, following its appointment of AccorHotels as property manager.



From left: Sang-Yoon Park and Dong-Joon Song

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Snapshots

All smiles in sunny Manila

By Eugene Tang



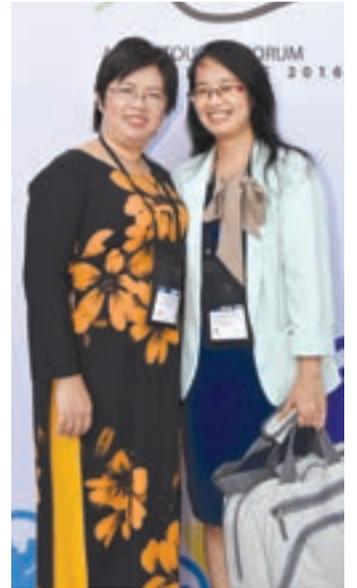
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Rajah Travel Corporation Philippines' Anjanette Mingay



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BM Reisevermittlung Germany's Burkhardt Milkowitsch and LaCity Travel Australia's Allan Piggot



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News

Regional Secretariat for MRA-TP springs to life

Training, job-matching and marketing are among its many tasks from 2016



Arief: ASEAN workforce will be upgraded

MORE than three years after the launch of the Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Tourism Professional (MRA-TP) in November 2012, the 10 ASEAN ministers have finally moved to sign an agreement to establish a Regional Secretariat in Jakarta to implement related activities from this year onwards.

Ong Hong Peng, secretary general, Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Malaysia, said the signing marked a "significant milestone of tourism development for ASEAN".

Strategic actions for the

Regional Secretariat will include providing and facilitating training programmes at the regional level to develop a pool of ASEAN master trainers and assessors.

It will be the Regional Secretariat's responsibility to conduct marketing and promotional activities in the region, including aiding the exchange of information among the member states.

It will also support the convening of international, regional and national events regarding the implementation of the MRA and serve as the

communications centre for all stakeholders. It will benchmark the implementation of the MRA between the member states through the ASEAN Tourism Qualification Equivalent Matrix while maintaining and updating both the ASEAN Common Competency Standards for Tourism Professionals as well as the Common ASEAN Tourism Curriculum and the Regional Qualification Framework and Skills Recognition System.

As well, the Regional Secretariat will develop and maintain a registry of job opportu-

nities on the ASEAN Tourism Professional Registration System (ATPRS), while facilitating job-matching between tourism professionals and prospective employers.

Indonesia's Ministry of Tourism will host the Regional Secretariat office in Jakarta. Said minister of tourism Arief Yahya: "We hope that this system (the ATPRS) can provide vast opportunity to the professional workforce to enhance their capabilities and career, according to the objective of the implementation of the MRA on tourism professionals."

IN BRIEF

New cycling tour launched in Sulawesi

SPICEROADS Cycle Tours has rolled out a nine-day cycling tour around Sulawesi, Indonesia. Participants will discover the destination's diverse geography from the highlands, which are home to the Torajans, to the beaches of the Bugis people while learning about Sulawesi's culture and customs.

AccorHotels furthers its community outreach

ACCORHOTELS has opened Sanggar Yayasan Peduli Tunas Bangsa centre in Bedugul Bali – its second education centre in Indonesia for less privileged children – to teach local children basic English, computer skills, cooking and other life skills.

ATRA seeks CSO status

By S Puvaneswary

The ASEAN Tourism Research Association (ATRA) is seeking endorsement from ASEAN ministers in its bid to be recognised as a Civil Society Organisation (CSO), which will stand in good stead to provide tourism research support to ASEAN NTOs and seek funding from various institutions.

Explaining how the network can benefit ASEAN NTOs in areas like the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2016-2025, Victor Wee, professor from the School of Hospitality, Tourism and Culinary Arts at Taylors University Malaysia, said: "ATRA could undertake research in regional analysis, capacity development, innovative best practices, monitoring and evaluation of projects, and strengthen the planning and implementation of various strategies and programmes."

ATRA can also undertake research on mega trends affecting the future tourism develop-

ment, which can benefit industry players such as ASEANTA affiliates.

Wee commented: "Until ATRA came into the picture, there was no proper structure or formal mechanism for collaboration among the research institutions on tourism-related matters within ASEAN."

"The promotion of regional cooperation in education, training and research will contribute towards a dynamic, innovative and responsive ASEAN community," he added.

ATRA is established in 2013 by 15 tourism education and research institutions in ASEAN to form a network of closer collaboration in tourism and hospitality services. Founded and led by Taylor's University in Malaysia, the association comprises Brunei Institute of Tourism, Vietnam National University, Thailand's Prince of Songkla University and Singapore's James Cook University, among others.



Wee: collaborative research in ASEAN

Philippines whet tourists' appetite with food festivals

By Rosa Ocampo

APRIL is dubbed "food month" in the Philippines as it readies to host two international culinary events – Madrid Fusion Manila and World Food Street Congress – in addition to a month-long gastronomic feast across the country.

"This is an opportunity for us to share to a global audience the richness and contemporary edge of Filipino gastronomy," said Tourism Promotions Board COO Domingo Ramon Enerio III.

A highlight of the food month is Madrid Fusion Manila taking place from April 7 to 9, said Enerio, which will feature a larger contingent of world-renowned and Michelin-star chefs in its second edition this year.

Expected to draw some 1,000 tourists, Madrid Fusion Manila

will feature Spanish and Asian chefs, including Joan Roca of three-Michelin-star El Celler de Can Roca, named S Pellegrino's world's best restaurant for 2015; Eneko Atxa of two-Michelin-star Azurmendi Restaurant in Basque, Spain; and Yoshihiro Narisawa of three-Michelin-star Les Creations de Narisawa in Tokyo.

The World Street Food Congress, which were held in Singapore for past two years, will take place in Manila from April 6 to 9, confirmed Enerio.

A big hit in Singapore, the Food Congress promotes comfort and street food in a bid to preserve food culture and heritage, professionalise the street food craft and open business op-

portunities.

Projected to bring in about 1,000 tourists, the Philippines might negotiate to be the venue for the World Street Food Congress next year depending on the success of the event.

Taking place in conjunction with the April food month is the Flavours of the Philippines, a food festival featuring food markets and curated Filipino menus in numerous establishments around the country, Enerio said.

Flavours of the Philippines will include activities such as *kulinarya* tours, cooking lessons and demo, food fiestas and sales, weekend markets in Legazpi Village, Makati and Centris in Quezon City, among others.



Enerio: cooking up a sizzling line-up

Advance Russian language classes to be offered soon

By S Puvaneswary

TOUR operators and guides in South-east Asia who had completed the beginner Russian language courses offered in 2010 and 2015 in Jakarta and Siem Reap respectively may soon be able to sharpen their skills through an advance course.

The 2.5-month course, which is pending budget approval at press time, will be made available to 20 partici-

pants. It will be fully sponsored by the ASEAN-Russia Financial

Fund of Dialogue Partnership, according to Yuri Kopylov, project coordinator for Russian language courses for ASEAN member countries. All expenses, including the cost of travel and accommodation, will be covered and participants will receive an allowance.

Kopylov told the *Daily* that 58 participants had completed the

three-month beginner course.

Kopylov, who is also the vice-rector of the Russian State University for Tourism & Service based in Moscow, said the advance course will be offered by the university. He hopes the course will begin by this summer.

He added: "Besides being more proficient in the Russian language, we want participants to have a better understanding of Russian culture so they can better serve Russian tourists visiting (South-east Asia)."



Kopylov: hoping for summer classes

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Meet the buyers

“The new area of focus, which will be new for us, will be the Philippines – covering the cosmopolitan city, the incredible islands and some eco products. We will also be interested in remote, new destinations in Indonesia in places like Makassar, Komodo, Sulawesi, Sumba and Irian Jaya. Malaysia and Singapore will also be good for updating of products, renewing contracts and networking. New products in the Mekong Vally will be interesting as well.”

Eric R. Sinnaya,
Managing director, Morahols Travel Sdn Bhd,
Malaysia



“We are interested to look out for destinations across the US, Canada, Scandinavia, the Philippines, UAE and Japan for products and services like hotel packages, FIT, MICE and group tour packages, tourism boards, travel agencies, hotels as well as convention centres.”

Priscilla Chin
Operation manager, Travel Smart Sdn Bhd,
Malaysia

“I will be looking into MICE-related venues, four- or five-star hotels and resorts, group and corporate tours, leisure packages, land tour services, DMCs, MICE companies as well as travel-related technology services in countries like Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.”

Chuang Boon Hua
Product development director, Pryxious Holidays Planner Sdn Bhd, Malaysia



“I am interested to look into Manila, Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia and Brunei.”

Christina Pakpahan
Director, OKDO Tour & Travel Service,
Indonesia



“I am interested in the Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia and Myanmar tour operators, hotels and professional organisations that can handle group and individual tours for my company’s valuable clients.”

Antoaneta Petrova
General manager and CEO, Prime Holidays
Bulgaria Ltd, Bulgaria



“We will be paying attention to ASEAN countries like Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia and Laos. Being a tour operator and leading MICE company, ASEAN destinations are a huge potential for us. We will be looking for good hotel chains and DMCs for our groups and other packages.”

Chetan Gupta
Director of sales & marketing, R G Destinations Pvt Ltd, India

“I am keen on four- and five-star hotels, boutique hotels, villas with swimming pools, airlines, tour operators as well as tour operator care and transfer services from the Philippines, Indonesia, Papua, Timor, Vanuatu, Fiji, Samoa, Palau, Vietnam and Cambodia.”

Krzysztof Janus
Director owner, Travel And Business Center
Janus, Poland



“We are looking to meet companies from all Asian countries, mainly hotels and other suppliers which focuses on FIT leisure markets.”

Christa Buehlmann
Product manager, tourasia, Switzerland

“I am looking for one-of-a-kind unique experiences throughout Asia that includes accommodations, tours and activities, eco-tourism products, environmental award-winning and certified locations, villa stays for extended families and small groups, volunteer trip experiences, as well as travel experiences one can’t find elsewhere.”

Alyssa Johnson
President and founder, Trips 4 Fundraising,
USA

"I am looking into inbound destination management companies, travel management companies, luxury travel suppliers, event management companies and entertainment suppliers, professional conference organisers, adventure and incentive travel suppliers, airlines and airline alliances, coach-car and railway operators, convention and exhibition venues, convention and visitor bureaus, cruise lines, global distribution systems, golf courses, hotels and resorts, national/state tourism organisations, service apartments, spa, suppliers of gifts and premiums, theme parks, trade associations, travel/meeting technology and multimedia companies, travel related suppliers, trade publications and media. Destinations I am interested in will be the Philippines as well as Myanmar."

Sreat Mom Sophear
Director, Sophiya Travel & Tours, Cambodia



"I am always keen on discovering new products for our portfolio, be it hotels, resorts, lodges or appealing journeys."

Juerg Hartmann
Product manager asia, Travelhouse – Wettstein & Hotelplan Suisse, Switzerland

"I am interested in culture, islands for diving spots, luxury and typical hotels and resorts, DMCs as well as cruises."

Claude de Saint Perier,
Director and owner, SERTE/MICE Challenger, France

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Intelligence

Singaporeans go places

Known as avid holiday makers, Singaporeans have chalked up more outbound trips by air in the first three quarters of 2015 than the same time in 2014, discovers a study by GfK and TravelScan

In the first GfK TravelScan study, conducted last year using consolidated and aggregated industry booking data provided by members of the National Association of Travel Agents Singapore, it was found that more than 684,000 leisure trips were made out of Singapore from January to September 2015 – 3% more compared to the same time frame last year.

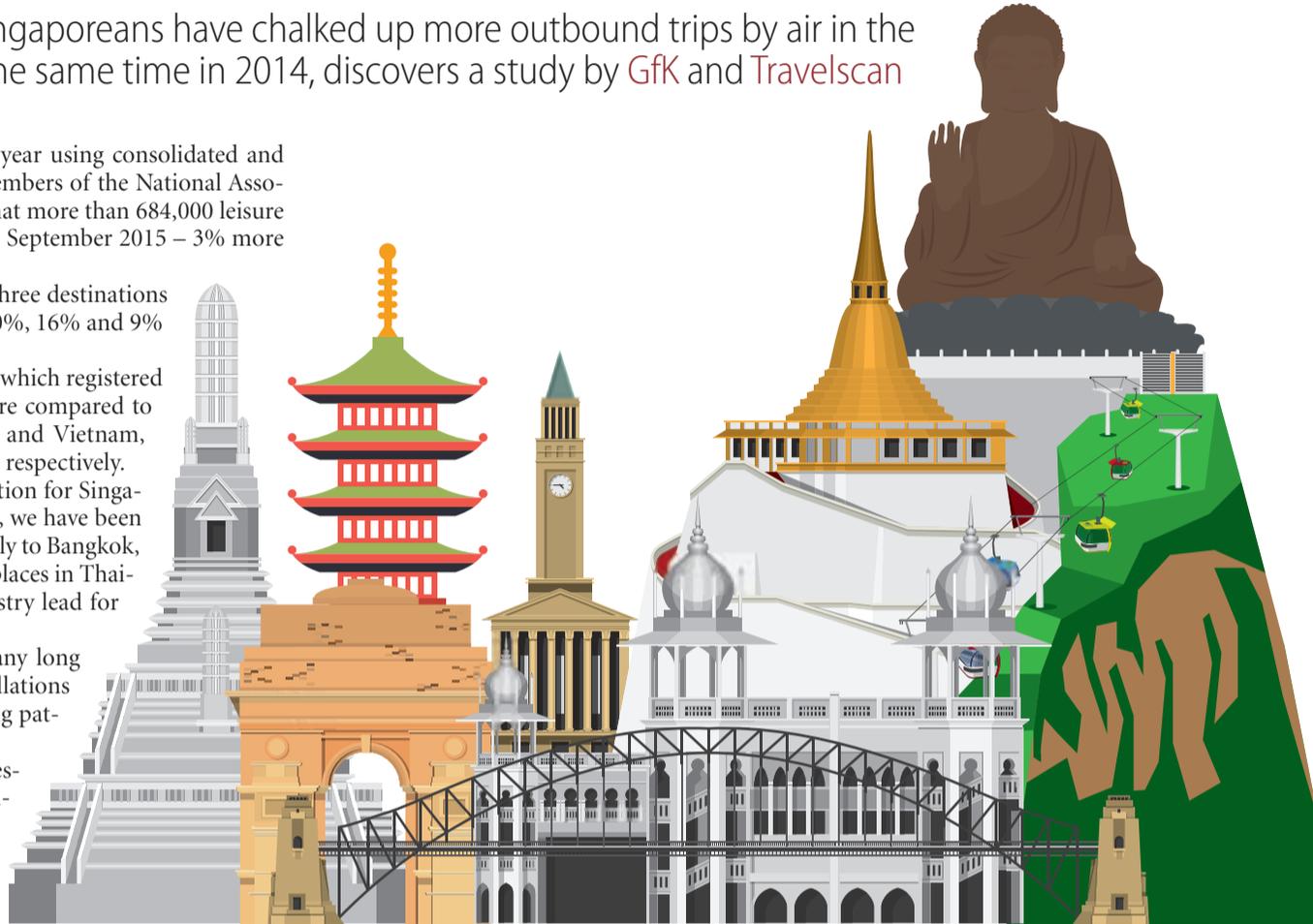
China, Thailand and Hong Kong were the top three destinations among air travellers from Singapore, occupying 20%, 16% and 9% respectively of all outbound leisure flights.

In the first three quarters of 2015, the countries which registered significantly more visitors flying in from Singapore compared to the same period last year were Thailand, Japan, and Vietnam, where flight bookings rose by 44%, 33%, and 12% respectively.

“Thailand has always been an attractive destination for Singapore travellers and since the beginning of the year, we have been seeing a surge in the number of visitors flying mostly to Bangkok, Phuket and Chiang Mai – the three most popular places in Thailand,” noted Laurens Van Den Oever, global industry lead for travel & hospitality at GfK.

“The recent incident in Bangkok didn’t have any long term impact on local tourism it seems; flight cancellations was only for a couple of weeks after which booking patterns were back on course again.”

Although China remained the most popular destination where around one in every five (19%) visitors from Singapore headed for, 2015 saw a 6% drop in flight bookings from Singapore. Hong Kong and Indonesia similarly reported declines of 11% and 8%.



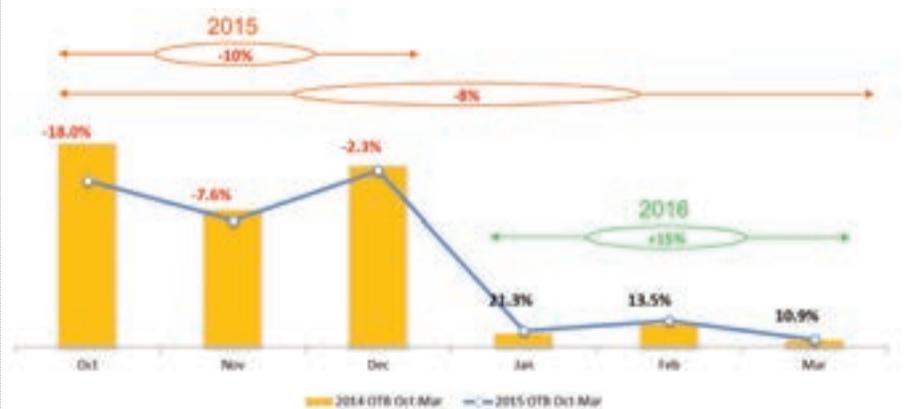
Leisure monthly departures (pax)

Jan-Sep15



Forward leisure bookings (pax)

Oct-Mar16 vs Oct-Mar15



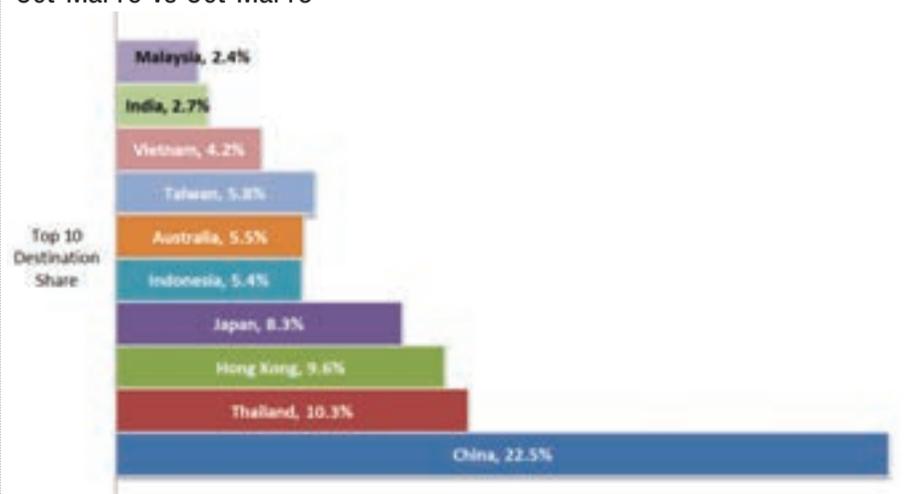
Top 10 destinations (pax)

YTD Sep15 vs YTD Sep14



Top 10 destination share for forward leisure bookings

Oct-Mar16 vs Oct-Mar15



Source: GfK TravelScan; Flight only including "Packages" estimated coverage 52%



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- MINES International Exhibition & Convention Centre (MIECC)
www.miecc.mines.com.my
- Sunway Pyramid Convention Centre
www.sunwayhotels.com
- Setia City Convention Centre
www.setiacitycc.com
- IDCC Shah Alam
www.idcc.com.my

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Wider access on the horizon



Agents believe that Indonesia's abolishment of the cabotage principles will encourage cruise lines to venture into Indonesia's remote destinations like Raja Ampat (above), which is not accessible by air

How will Indonesia's lifting of cabotage restrictions shape the future development of South-east Asia's cruise industry? [Mimi Hudoyo](#), [S Puvaneswary](#) and [Paige Lee Pei Qi](#) speak to cruise lines and agents

In a bid to boost arrivals, the Indonesian government has recently relaxed its cabotage principles imposed on cruise ships by allowing foreign vessels to anchor at selected ports in the country.

International cruise lines can now embark/disembark tourists through the seaports of Benoa (Bali), Tanjung Priok (Jakarta), Tanjung Perak (Surabaya), Belawan (Medan) and Soekarno-Hatta (Makassar).

Cruise companies interviewed by the *Daily* are salivating at the prospects of a larger domestic cruise market and more interesting itineraries.

Welcoming the development, Michael Goh, senior vice president – sales, Star Cruises, said: “We foresee it will have a significant and positive impact on the region, boosting the development of both the domestic and South-east Asian cruise markets.

“Recently, Star Cruises had completed its 46-night Southern Hemisphere cruise onboard *SuperStar Virgo*, calling at several ports in Indonesia including Jakarta and Bali (in late-2014). With the new ruling, this will enable Star Cruises to explore new itineraries and most importantly, expand our reach in Indonesia, as the country has the making and potential to be one of the leading cruise hubs in the region.

Buhdy Bok, Costa Group's Asia president, is equally positive: “As a key market for Costa, Indonesia's latest move provides a huge opportunity to develop the cruise market both domestically and around the region. We are always keen to explore new

itineraries in the region, and are excited to see the development of more itineraries with the increase in port calls in Indonesia, enriching our cruise holiday offerings for guests in the Asia region.”

Melvyn Yap, regional director-Asia of Silversea Cruises, said: “The Indonesian archipelago is a long stretch. This will give us a lot of time to explore all the beautiful islands instead of trying to get to another country just to meet the cabotage requirements.”

It is hence not surprising that Indonesia's outbound operators are viewing the cabotage lift in positive light, especially as Indonesians, who still need to fly out of the country to embark on a cruise ship, will be able to sail from domestic ports in the future.

Nurdin Supena, manager, Bayu Buana Travel, said: “It would be more attractive

for Indonesians because it means reduced cost in terms of air tickets to Singapore, and it is also time-effective to be able to hop onto a cruise from Jakarta as the major outbound market comes from here.

“The cruise package prices need to be attractive though,” she added. “The most important thing, however, is the readiness of the ports to berth the big ships which are operating in the region nowadays.”

Furthermore, the ability to cruise from homeground will likely appeal to Indonesian travellers seeking to enjoy the facilities on board a ship, rather than those whose cruise journeys are motivated by the destination, observed Rama Tirtawisata, group managing director of Panorama Leisure Group.

“The new policy opened up more opportunities to grow the first group, as it would be more convenient for them to

start their trips from Indonesia. For these people, the destination is not the main interest, and short (South-east Asian) cruise programmes such as Singapore-Port Klang-Phuket are popular.

“For the second group – those who would travel to places like the Mediterranean or Alaska – the new policy does not bring any change,” he added.

At the same time, Rama also sees ample opportunities for international cruise lines to roll out domestic programmes for Indonesians across the sprawling archipelago. “Indonesia has so many interesting destinations such as Togean and Raja Ampat which are not easily accessible by air, and cruising can be a good alternative for adventurous Indonesians,” he said.

Likewise, Lim Chee Tong, managing director of Malaysia's Jebson Travel & Tours Services, foresees cruise lines will offer itineraries to more exotic destinations in Indonesia beyond current ports of calls like Komodo Island and Bali. “This will benefit agents as they will have more products to sell,” he said.

On the other hand, Richard Vuilleumier, managing director, Panorama Tours Malaysia, foresees a lukewarm reception for all-Indonesian itineraries, as many Malaysians have already been to Indonesia for shopping, sightseeing, golfing and cultural experiences, and therefore would rather take cruises to novel destinations farther afield.

John Chan, business consultant at Malaysia's Kris International Traveltours, views the cabotage lift as the nascent de-

It would be more attractive for Indonesians because it means reduced cost in terms of air tickets to Singapore, and it is also time-effective to be able to hop onto a cruise from Jakarta as the major outbound market comes from here.

Nurdin Supena
Manager, Bayu Buana Travel



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velopment of the Indonesian cruise industry and as it matures, there will be more opportunities for corporate companies to hold their incentive events on-board a cruise ship, with embarkation and disembarkation in Indonesia.

He commented: "For the Malaysian market, Indonesia will be a new destination for cruise holidays as compared to Southern Thailand and Hong Kong. Malaysia will also benefit as passengers could transit at the international airports here before boarding an onward flight to Indonesia."

The biggest loser may be Singapore, which has established itself as the cruise hub of South-east Asia.

Alicia Seah, director of marketing communications at Dynasty Travel, deems the cabotage lift a threat as it will "definitely affect and reduce the numbers" boarding from Singapore.

She said: "With Indonesia's big population base numbers, secondary cities will benefit to depart from their homeport country rather than via Singapore where accommodation and transfers will definitely cost more."

Echoing similar sentiments, Chan Brothers Travel Singapore's marketing communications executive, Rebecca Chia, commented: "With the lifting of cabotage



Indonesia's cabotage lift may threaten Singapore's cruise hub position in the future

of the sea, we foresee that passengers from Jakarta may choose to embark and disembark from their homeports instead of Singapore for domestic and regional cruising.

"We have seen bookings from the Indonesia market gaining traction only in the last two years, with majority of travellers originating from Batam, Jakarta and Yogyakarta. (Nevertheless), they may still find it more convenient to embark and disembark

from Singapore than through their own seaports due to our strategic location within South-east Asia," Chia said.

However, the trade is not expecting Indonesia to compete with Singapore's cruise hub position yet.

Seah added: "We reckon that there will be challenges in (the Indonesia cruise industry) for at least the next two to three years in terms of infrastructure building

as well as pricing strategies as they may be pegged against the US dollar."

Star Cruises' Goh urged: "We hope Indonesia will continue to implement cruise-friendly measures and develop the overall cruise tourism network, economy and infrastructure for the selected seaports, which are equally important in order to attract more cruises and tourists to the country in the near future."

South-east Asian cruise market makes bigger waves

Cruise tourism's economic contribution

The fast-growing cruise industry has made a significant economic contribution of nearly US\$1.7 billion to South-east Asia in 2014, according to a Cruise Line International Association's (CLIA) study which covered the five countries of Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore and Vietnam.

There were a total of 1,672 cruise ship calls at the destination ports of the five countries. A quarter of them were turnaround port calls and the remaining 75 per cent transit and overnight port calls. Malaysia had the highest number of transit and total calls (35 per cent of transit port calls and 30 per cent of total cruise ship calls in the region) while Singapore had the highest volume of turnaround calls (63 per cent).

The calls generated just over three million passenger visit days and just over 422,000 crew visit days. Cruise ports in Malaysia and Singapore each generated more than one million passenger and cruise visit days.

Cruise passengers were the bigger spenders, spending a total of US\$1.5 billion while crew spent US\$22.9 million. Turnaround passengers spent an estimated US\$1.3 billion (an average of US\$842 per visit day), with transit and overnight passengers spending US\$198 million (US\$132 per visit day).

Rapid increase in port calls

The number of port calls in South-east Asia has grown 28 per cent from 2013 to reach a record 1,973 in 2015, according to the latest CLIA figures.

Malaysia welcomed 580 port calls in 2015, the second largest number in Asia after Japan. Singapore with 374 calls is also among the top ports with over 200 total calls in 2015.

"These are very encouraging results and a positive sign for future success. Such dynamic growth confirms that South-east Asia's great potential as a major international cruise market is being realised," said Ann Sherry, chairperson for CLIA South-east Asia and CEO of Carnival Australia.

Cruising boom in Asia

Cruise tourism in Asia is growing at double-digit rates – both in cruise liner capacity deployed in the region and as a passenger source market. The absolute number of cruise travellers from Asia has almost doubled since 2012, growing from

775,000 to nearly 1.4 million passengers, a 34 per cent compound annual growth rate (CAGR).

China is a main driver of passenger growth in Asia, adding 480,000 more cruise travellers since 2012 – an almost 80 per cent CAGR. Other markets with leading double-digit growth include Hong Kong (74 per cent), India (36 per cent), Japan (20 per cent) and Taiwan (14 per cent).

China accounted for nearly half of Asia's passenger volume in 2014. An estimated 679,000 passengers were from mainland China, compared with 700,000 from the rest of Asia.

Other leading source markets include Singapore (163,000 passengers), Taiwan (137,000) and Japan (119,000).

In response to the increasing demand, the cruise industry is bringing more cruise visits to Asian destinations. In fact, Asia had the greatest gain in share of global capacity deployment (2.4 percentage points) among all regions.

There were 980 more port calls in 2015, up 34 per cent in absolute volume from 2013. Destinations with the greatest growth in total port calls are Japan and Malaysia, with 238 and 197 additional calls respectively. Other destinations with total port call growth include Hong Kong (101), Singapore (84) and South Korea (68).

The CLIA study findings show that Asian cruisers sailed mostly within the region in 2014. Almost half (48 per cent) of them took short cruises of four to six nights, followed by two to three nights (38 per cent).

The momentum of cruise tourism in Asia continued in 2015. Twenty-six brands are serving the market in 2014, with 52 ships deployed and more than 1,000 cruises scheduled.

As in the previous year, cruises within Asia and short sailings of two to three nights and four to six nights dominate itineraries in 2015.

Cruise ship calls and expenditures in South-east Asia in 2014

	Region total	Indonesia	Malaysia	Singapore	Thailand	Vietnam
Cruise calls						
Transit	1,066	139	368	28	237	294
Turnaround	423	12	132	267	11	1
Overnight	183	25	5	40	45	68
Total	1,672	176	505	335	293	363
Passenger and crew visit days						
Turnaround passengers	1,512,934	11,763	434,630	1,031,553	34,394	594
Transit/Overnight passengers	1,498,138	139,685	503,841	84,157	379,735	390,720
Crew	422,598	28,668	138,649	100,883	75,918	78,480
Total	3,433,670	180,116	1,077,120	1,216,593	490,047	469,794
Direct expenditures (US\$ million)						
Turnaround passengers	1,273.77	8.54	315.14	924.72	24.94	0.43
Transit/Overnight passengers	198.11	20.48	35.53	12.62	71.52	57.96
Crew	22.90	1.89	8.47	5.64	4.00	2.90
Cruise lines	166.32	5.94	5.05	148.69	3.39	3.25
Total	1,661.10	36.85	364.19	1,091.67	103.85	64.54

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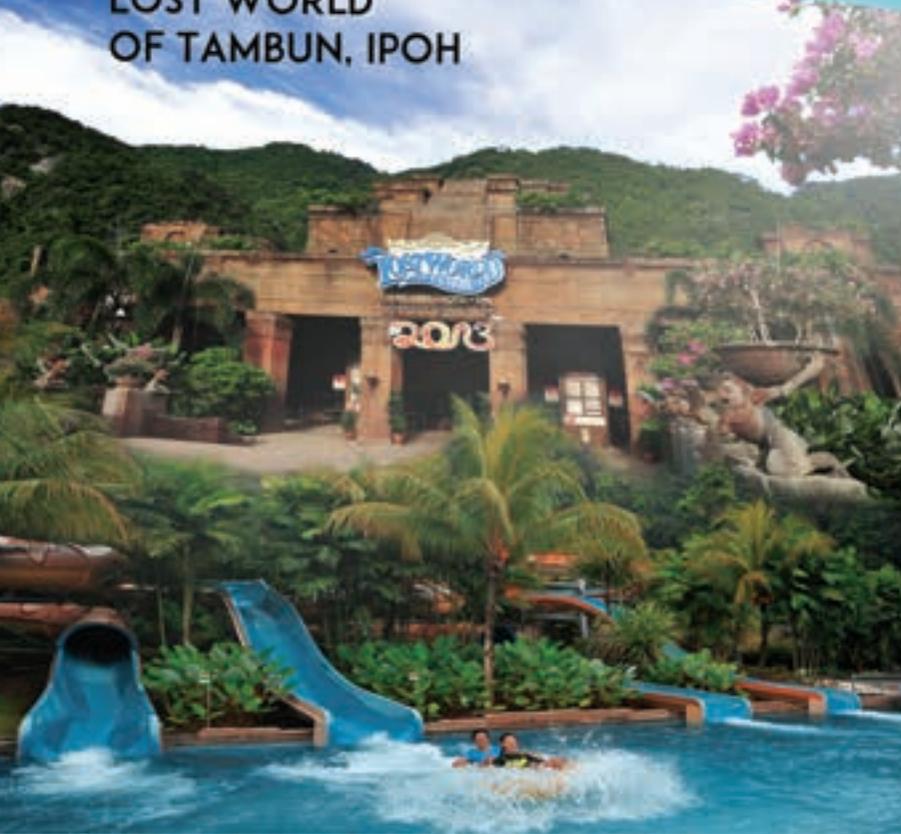
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Going for another solid year

Arrival figures are climbing and new hotel developments are coming up to support the demand, writes Sid Dhartha

The Ministry of Hotels and Tourism is confident of Myanmar welcoming 4.5 million tourists by the end of 2015, following a record breaking arrival in 2014.

Figures from the ministry show that 759,181 tourists had entered the country through the Yangon International Airport - a major gateway for the country - between January 1 and end-September, 2015, representing a 25 per cent increase over the same period in 2014.

At press time in December, Phyo Wia Yar Zar, chairman of Myanmar Tourism Marketing (MTM), said "the outlook for the coming months is promising and the remaining numbers will be made up to (achieve our target for 2015)".

Arrivals in October had fallen though, but Phyo Wia Yar Zar was quick to point out that the slowdown in traffic that month was neither a result of a demand-supply issue nor the national election on November 8.

May Myat Mon Win, general manager of Chatrium Hotel Yangon, expressed optimism too.

"We have seen annual increases in business travel while cruise tourism has



Kyaiktiyo Pagoda

Destination in numbers

300,000

The number of visitors expected in Bagan in 2015, up from 250,000 in 2014

4.5 million

The number of tourist arrivals targeted for 2015, a 53 per cent increase from 2014

759,181

The number of arrivals through Yangon International Airport in the first nine months of 2015, up 25 per cent from the same period in 2014

great potential for further growth," she said, adding that Myanmar needs sufficient quality hotels to cater to the growing demand.

She shared that several hotel projects

are being developed and they are expected to complete between 2017 to 2020.

Properties that have opened in 2015 include the Best Western Plus Eastern Palace Hotel in Mandalay.

According to the ministry, Myanmar has 47 foreign direct invested hotel projects with about 9,030 rooms.

Meanwhile, MTM, as a marketing arm of Myanmar Tourism Federation, will continue to drive awareness of the destination. As 2015 drew to a close, MTM ran roadshows in Hong Kong and Chiang Mai in December. This year it will participate in ASEAN Tourism Forum 2016 and ITB 2016.

"The Myanmar Pavilion at ITB 2016 in Berlin will depict a Kayah theme with a view to putting the emerging destination, Kayah State, on the tourism map. We are also planning familiarisation trips for tour operators and travel writers from the US in February 2016," Phyo Wia Yar Zar revealed.

In line with the new policy on Community Involvement in Tourism, MTM will also develop new products that will bring visitors closer to the local communities and spread tourism receipt to the grass-roots level.

"MTM will focus on creating products to suit the target markets of our members and help them position their products in their desired markets," he said.

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HOW TO SELL

DO Yangon is home to the largest collection of colonial-era buildings in South-east Asia and a heritage walking tour with the non-profit **Yangon Heritage Trust** will reveal the history of the city's storied past.

EAT A charming establishment on the second floor of a restored colonial building on Pansodan Road, **Rangoon Tea House** offers such Burmese staples as *mohinga* (noodles in fish broth), *la phet* (tea leaf salad), Rangoon samosas and a wide variety of tea blends in a comfortable, buzzy setting.

SEE A visit to Yangon is incomplete without a stop at **Shwedagon Pagoda**, a 99m gilded stupa that is arguably Myanmar's most iconic landmark. Visit the pagoda at dawn or sunset when it becomes beautifully illuminated and temperatures are cooler.

STAY Dating back to the 1920s, **Belmond Governor's Residence** is an imposing teak mansion hotel surrounded by verdant greenery and lotus pools. The property features 47 keys, all boasting elegant teak furniture, hardwood floor and fan-cooled verandas.



Belmond Governor's Residence

WHAT'S NEW

1 Sedona Hotel Yangon

Sedona Hotel Yangon has soft-launched its new 29-storey Inya Wing featuring 431 guest rooms and suites, bringing total room capacity at Sedona to 779. Inya Wing is linked to the existing hotel block via a connector which comprises a new retail arcade. A new elevated podium also connects the two blocks, and houses a terrace featuring a swimming pool, the Real Fitness Signature Club and an all-day restaurant D'Cuisine.

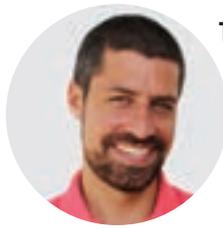
2 Anawrahta

Vietnam-based Heritage Line has recently added *Anawrahta* in Myanmar to its fleet of river cruisers. Having launched its maiden journey in September 2015, the 23-cabin luxury vessel will take guests to remote places on the Irrawaddy River not accessible by large ships. The *Anawrahta* is modelled after a turn-of-the-century vintage steamer mixing Burmese motifs and British colonial-style décor. The ship also features a bar, lounge, restaurant, spa, gym and Jacuzzi plunge-pool.



Sedona Hotel Yangon

VIEWPOINTS "What are your business prospects for 2016?"



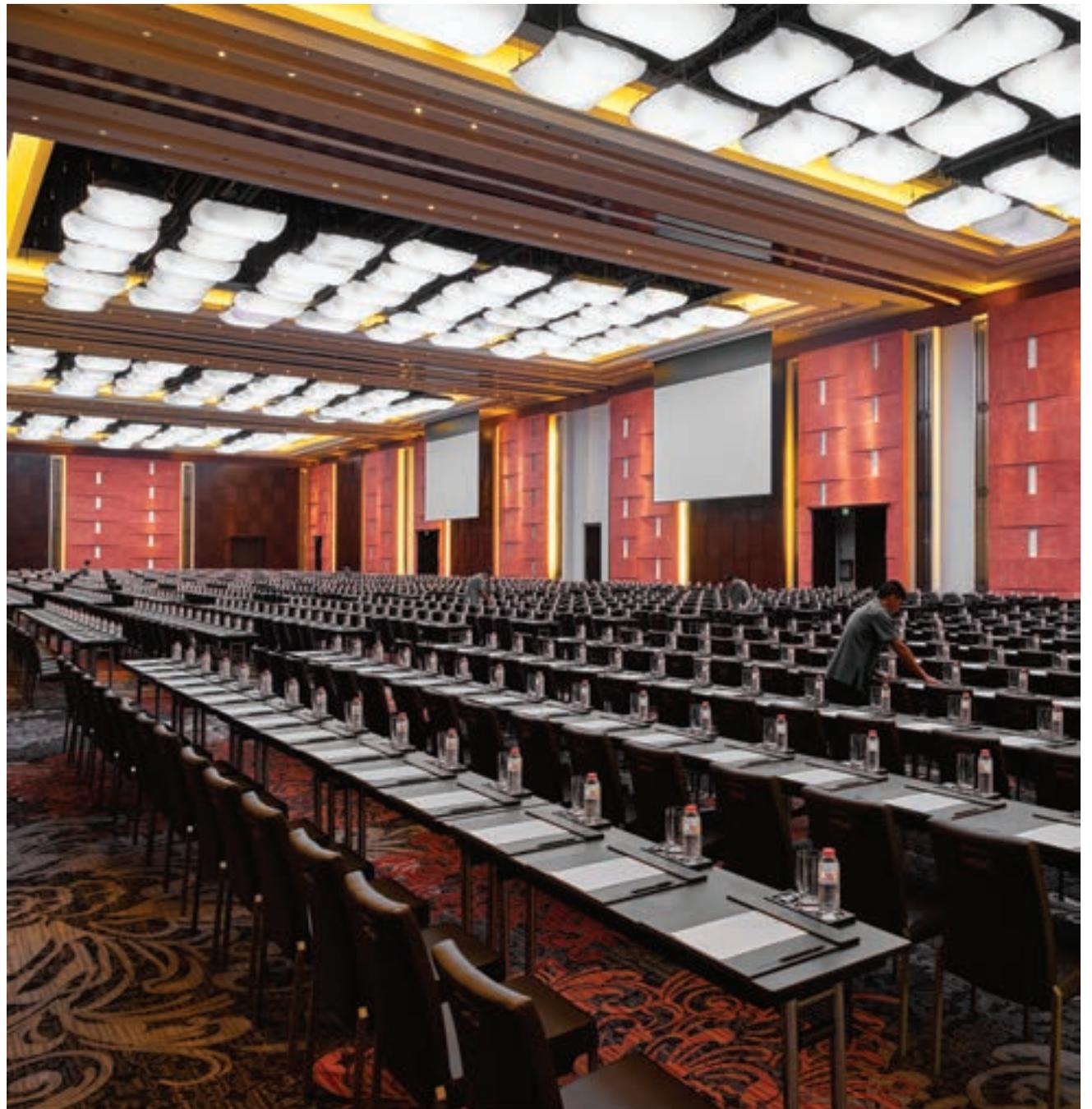
Thomas Barrows, product manager, Myanmar, Exo Travel

We are expecting a modest growth of five to 10 per cent in business next year. Bookings over the last few months have slowed down, which we believe was due to clients waiting to see the results of the November elections.



Edwin Briels, general manager, Khiri Travel Myanmar

Very positive! Myanmar has developed itself from a niche destination only for early innovators to a more mature one. A few years ago tourists visited Myanmar because it was "new". Nowadays they come because it has a lot to offer.



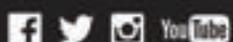
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Destination Indonesia

Building a bold brand

Intensive destination branding efforts in 2015 will continue into the new year, with greater attention being paid to developing the accessibility and tourism potential of 10 destinations in the country, reports [Mimi Hudoyo](#)



Mount Rinjani Lombok

Photo: 123RF.com

Indonesia Ministry of Tourism has built its promotional strategy around branding, publicity and advertising in 2015, with these activities taking up 80 per cent of its 1.3 trillion rupiah (US\$93 million) tourism promotion budget.

Arief Yahya, minister for tourism, said: "Destination branding is a weak point for Indonesia, therefore we have put in a lot of effort on (promoting) *Wonderful Indonesia*. We allotted 50 per cent of our budget for branding and 30 per cent on advertising."

The *Wonderful Indonesia* destination brand appeared in various forms and spaces, from TV commercials and programmes such as *Wonderful Indonesia Flavours* and *Wondernesia*, to online media, videotron and stickers covering public transportations. Awareness was built throughout Asia, specifically Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, the Philippines, China, Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan, as well as Australia, the Middle East, Europe and the US.

And Indonesia has reaped a good harvest, with the *Wonderful Indonesia* brand being ranked the 47th best country brand

by World Economic Forum's Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index 2015.

"This is (almost) 100-mark higher than the previous index," Arief said.

While these programmes would continue in 2016, Arief said the next step for the ministry would be to ensure that the brand was effective to convert the traveller's interest into a real trip.

"Being well known does not guarantee sales, so the next step is to sell the destination," he said.

At press time in early December, the minister expressed optimism in achieving 2015's target of 10 million arrivals and a tourism revenue of US\$12 billion.

This year the ministry is eyeing a 20 per cent increase in arrivals to 12 million, backed by a hefty tourism promotion budget of five trillion rupiah. Efforts will be focused on the development and promotion of 10 destinations.

Arief said: "Currently, 90 per cent of international arrivals to Indonesia are through three main destinations – Greater Bali (40 per cent of arrivals), Greater Jakarta (30 per cent) and Greater Riau Islands (20 per cent)."

"We cannot rely only on these destina-

tions. We need to develop and promote more, and we have picked 10 to focus on at this stage."

These destinations include North Sumatera with a focus on Lake Toba, Bangka-Belitung (Teluk Kelayang), Banten (Tanjung Lesung), Central Java (Borobudur Temple), Jakarta (Kepulauan Seribu), East Java (Bromo-Tengger-Semeru), Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara (Mandalika), East Nusa Tenggara (Labuan Bajo, the gateway to Komodo Island), Southeast Sulawesi (Wakatobi), and Maluku (Morotai).

They will receive infrastructure improvements such as the construction of airports, seaports and roads over the next four years.

On the marketing front, the tourism authority intends to match product highlights of each destination with source markets' interest.

I Gde Pitana, deputy minister for international tourism promotion of the Ministry of Tourism, said: "Lombok, for example, is branded as a Halal destination, so we will promote it to markets like the Middle East and Malaysia."

Places like Wakatobi and Morotai,

which are rich in underwater attractions, will be highlighted in destination promotions executed in Europe and Australia whose people value such draws.

The government's clear approach to tourism developments has instilled confidence in some local tourism players.

Budi Tirtawisata, group CEO of Panorama Group, told the *Daily*: "The government's focus on tourism has given the Indonesian tourism industry momentum to grow."

Panorama Destination aims to double its volume of inbound business in 2016 from 2015.

Garth Simmons, COO for AccorHotels Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore, expects the growth trend that emerged in 2H2015 to continue into 2016.

However, Simmons pointed out that business was "weak" for hotels in 1H2015, due to a government policy barring government meetings in hotels, and performance in 2H2015 was hardly near 2014 levels.

For Adje Wahjono, operations manager of Aneka Kartika Tours & Travel Services, forward bookings for the summer of 2016 have been "quite good".

VIEWPOINTS "What are your business prospects for 2016?"



Renato Domini, CEO, Panorama Destination

One of our priorities for 2016 is to improve internal communication and efficiency through the establishment of departments based on geographical locations of our source markets. With this restructuring we can concentrate on growing organically through the introduction of new products, and on expanding into new markets within Asia as well new domestic destinations in North Maluku and Sumba over the next two to three years.

We expect a growth of 15 to 20 per cent through acquisition and organic growth of 60 to 70 per cent.

We will also start distributing our products online through API/XML interfaces to travel agents and tour operators.

We will continue to invest in new vehicles and training our team members as well as our guides in 2016.



Umberto Cadamuro, COO Inbound, PACTO

Having weathered successfully the multiple challenges in 2015 and posted another excellent year in terms of profit, 2016 presents itself as exciting and rich in opportunities.

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Destination Indonesia

HOW TO SELL

DO The **Kebun Buah Mekarsari** claims to be the largest indigenous tropical fruit conservation centre in the world. It is located in Cileungsi, about an hour's drive from Jakarta. Here, visitors will find the best fruits from around Indonesia as well as a laboratory for agronomic research, breeding and cultivating of top quality fruit plants.

Visitors can learn about these fruits, take a scientific tour and engage in teambuilding activities.

SEE Drive east to **Bogor**, about 60km away from Jakarta city centre and visit the famous Kebun Raya Bogor. The botanic gardens have

more than 400 species of palm trees, 5,000 tropical trees and 3,000 varieties of orchids.

Kebun Raya Bogor is said to have been initiated by Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, when he was governor general of the East Indies between 1811 and 1816. A memorial of his wife is found here. The botanic gardens, however, was officially established by the Dutch in 1817.

Adjacent to the gardens is Bogor Presidential Palace, which from time to time is still used for state events.

EAT **Macaroni Panggang Bogor** on Jalan Salak is popular with Jakarta folks who escape to Bogor on weekends. It is a

one-stop restaurant and bakery that reminisces the Dutch colonial era. The building itself is an old house with gardens and diners can sit indoors or on the patio and veranda. The menu features Western dishes, local Bogor delights and favourites from West Java.

STAY The **101 Bogor Suryakencana** is good for leisure and business travellers. The 156-room hotel is located in the China Town of Bogor Heritage area, on the famous food street of Jalan Suryakencana. It is also close to Kebun Raya Bogor and Bogor Presidential Palace. For meeting groups, the hotel can host events with up to 300 people.



Karnaval Mekarsari

Destination in numbers

8,017,589

The total arrivals to Indonesia between January and October 2015, up 3.4 per cent over the same period in 2014. This figure is, however, shy of the destination's target arrival as of end-October of 8.1 million

18.9

The percentage increase in arrivals from China between January and October 2015, compared to the same period in 2014. The Chinese market recorded the greatest growth, thanks to heavy promotions taken by Indonesia throughout 2015. Visitor arrivals from China during the period was 966,988

58.7

The year-to-date average hotel occupancy across Indonesia as of October, according to STR Global – nine per cent down from the corresponding period in 2014. Hoteliers blame the economic slow-down, a room glut in some parts of Indonesia, and restrictions on government meetings in hotels from late 2014 to early 2015. However, average daily rate was up 3.2 per cent to 1,103,164 rupiah (US\$80)

WHAT'S NEW

1 Padma Resort Ubud

Padma Hotels' second property in Bali has opened in Payangan, Ubud. The 149-room Padma Resort Ubud is located on an 11-hectare plot, and features contemporary Balinese architecture and artworks in a natural setting.

Rooms and suites offer views of either the river valley or treetops, and boast artisan-crafted furnishings, hand-carved wooden detailing, private balconies, and spa-inspired en-suite bathrooms.

Facilities include an infinity swimming pool, a spa, fitness centres, a 3.4km jogging track, a restaurant and lounge, a library and a children's playground.

Meeting planners are welcomed with a ballroom for up to 126 pax and two boardrooms for up to 66 people each.

2 Seminyak Village

The new Seminyak Village shopping mall opened in Seminyak, Bali last October. Developed by Melium Nusantara, a property

developer affiliated with Malaysia's luxury fashion purveyor, The Melium Group, Seminyak Village aims to cater to a market demand that is crucial to the island's overall development as an international tourist hub, said Dimitri Pantazaras, managing director, Melium Nusantara.

The two-storey mall houses 48 shops and restaurants, and offers shoppers a landscaped rooftop terrace for a moment's rest.

3 Le Bon Vivant Restaurant

Bali's Sanur welcomed the new Le Bon Vivant Restaurant in November, a dining destination that takes pride in using fresh ingredients sourced from local fishermen and farmers and artisan producers as well as specialties imported from Europe, the US and Australia.

The highlight in the restaurant's open kitchen is the wood-burning oven which gives dishes a tantalising smoky identity.

The restaurant's rustic charcoal grill

delivers delicate seafood and prime meats that are charred to perfection.

Diners are spoiled for choice, thanks to a menu that features a variety of appetizers, signature foie gras preparations, charcoal grill specialties, and modern takes on classical dishes such as bouillabaisse and *confit de canard*.

4 Alila Seminyak

Alila Seminyak opened last October on Bali's south-western coast, in the trendy side of Seminyak. It comprises 240 contemporary rooms and suites, one of which is a penthouse.

Alila Seminyak is the first resort in Indonesia to surpass the rigorous EarthCheck standards, achieving a 44-point best practice score against the industry norm of five points. The resort's green solutions include the use of local and recyclable building materials, operating completely paperless and using its own bottled water. In addition, low energy light fixtures,

rainwater harvesting, environmental and building management systems have been implemented.

Facilities include an all-day dining restaurant, a beach bar, a 24-hour coffee bar, Alila Spa, five swimming pools located throughout the grounds of the resort, a gym with complimentary yoga and holistic fitness activities, an events centre that can host banquets with up to 350 guests, and a kids club.

5 The Ritz-Carlton Spa, Bali

The Ritz-Carlton, Bali now welcomes guests to its new spa, The Ritz-Carlton Spa. The spa menu features treatments that blend indigenous natural ingredients from the Indian Ocean with ancient Balinese methods and modern techniques.

There are 14 treatment rooms and patrons are invited to utilise the spa's Wet Lounge which comes with a warm whirlpool, cold plunge pool, sauna, steam room and shower prior to their treatment.



From left: Seminyak Village; The Ritz-Carlton Spa, Bali; Padma Resort Ubud



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Destination Vietnam

A little less complicated

A less convoluted visa process for some European countries results in increased arrivals. By **Dave Fox** and **Li Xu**

Vietnam's travel industry is breathing a sigh of relief, following a report from the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (VNAT) in August 2015 that for the first time in 13 months, the number of foreign visitors to the country have increased.

VNAT statistics show a 5.1 per cent year-on-year rise in visitors for July.

The uptick comes as Vietnam loosens regulation for tourists from six European nations. On July 1, 2015, the country began offering visa-free entry for 15 days to citizens of the UK, France, Germany, Spain, Italy and Belarus. Short-term tourists from 17 other nations were already allowed to enter without a visa.

Passport holders from elsewhere still face a time-consuming process. Under Vietnam's visa-on-arrival rules, tourists must first pay a fee online and obtain a letter authorising their entry into the country. They then pay an additional fee when they arrive.

"The visa is quite difficult and complicated for tourists," said Nguyen Thi

Tra Mi, sales marketing executive at TNK Travel in Ho Chi Minh City. She believes this time-consuming procedure, along with higher visa fees compared to neighbouring countries such as Cambodia, Laos and Thailand, discourages some tourists from visiting.

Nguyen added, however, that although she believes a simpler visa system for visitors from other countries would encourage tourism, the government faces a dilemma.

Many travellers who enter Vietnam on tourist visas are actually coming to work, she said. The government wants to attract legitimate tourists while stemming the tide of illegal workers.

Meanwhile, VNAT's marketing efforts are limited by a budget constraint. To maximise what it has, the tourist authority is relying on an e-marketing campaign that is under way for North European markets. The campaign is built on the new visa policies.

Visa-free entry, for nationals of six European countries until 2019, has been warmly welcomed by the tourism indus-



A new campaign to draw tourists to Vietnam is based on its new visa policies; Po Nagar in Nha Trang above

try. However, the real impact is unlikely to be evident until the middle of 2016, according to Kenneth Atkinson, chairman of the Tourism Working Group under the Vietnam Business Forum, who noted that Europeans are known to plan early for

their holidays.

Besides North European markets, VNAT has been targeting South Korea and Japan since late-2014 and has identified India and Russia as key markets with the potential to grow.



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Destination in numbers

50 per cent

The increase in percentage of arrivals from the UK, France, Germany, Italy and Spain expected for the next three years, up from the level in 2015

106

The number of hotels as of 2Q2015 in Ho Chi Minh City with around 13,800 rooms, while Hanoi has 63 hotels with around 8,855 rooms

US\$16 billion

The figure budgeted for a new airport near Ho Chi Minh City. The facility is expected to accommodate 100 million passengers per year by 2050

VIEWPOINTS What are your business prospects for 2016?



Chau A Nguyen, CEO, Oxalis Adventure Tours

Three-quarters of Vietnam is natural beauty. Adventure tours are increasing in popularity thanks to the 2011 cave movie, Sanctum, followed by the opening of Son Doong Cave. We are very positive about our business growth in 2016, and hope that good international publicity as well as the visa exemption policy will result in more European guests.



Edmar Manglo, revenue/e-commerce manager, Hotel Nikko Saigon

We expect a positive 2016 with Japan, South Korea and China dominating our guest mix. As Japanese and Korean companies are moving their businesses to Vietnam, it is a great time and opportunity to increase corporate business and MICE group bookings. Vietnam's hotel competition is getting fierce – three five-star hotels have opened in Ho Chi Minh City while Hanoi has five more hotels opening soon.

HOW TO SELL

DO go on Diethelm Travel Vietnam's Green Halong Cruise with Paradise Cruises.

This three-day programme, which departs daily from Hanoi, is designed to address the environmental issues Halong Bay faces. Halong Bay is one of the country's greatest tourist attractions and natural beauties.

Diethelm teamed up with Paradise Cruises and Green Halong, a local NGO that provides a range of programmes to maintain the environmental integrity of Halong Bay, the cruise offers eco-conscious travellers a phenomenal travel deal and rewarding experience while caring for the UNESCO World Heritage site. Explore the ethereal bay, enjoy gorgeous cabins and, most importantly, help maintain this natural world wonder.

SEE the colourful **Dalat Flower Festival**. Held once every two years in December, this festival showcases local blossoms and features a flower exhibition, a carnival and a marketplace where visitors can buy flowers as well as locally-grown tea and coffee, among other activities.

EAT at **The Royal Pavilion**. This fine-dining Cantonese restaurant in luxury hotel, The Reverie Saigon, offers a feast for all senses.

Its interior, heavily influenced by feng shui, is marked by red and gold, colours that represent happiness and good fortune. The green malachite stone veneer of the grand piano and clock by Italian design luminary, Luca Baldi of Baldi Home Jewels, was spe-

cially commissioned due to its resemblance to jade.

To satiate the palate, The Royal Pavilion's menu boasts prized delicacies such as abalone, sea cucumber and bird's nest alongside must-haves such as suckling pig, dim sum, Peking duck and honey-glazed barbecued pork.

STAY at **Hotel de Arts Saigon**. AccorHotels has launched Hotel de Arts Saigon as part of its French-themed MGallery Collection, marking its fifth property in Ho Chi Minh City and the fifth MGallery hotel in Vietnam.

The 168-key hotel is centrally located in Ho Chi Minh City, near the Notre Dame Cathedral, Opera House and historic Saigon Central Post Office. All rooms and suites feature free Wi-Fi, 50-inch LED TVs and touches of custom-painted furnishings.

F&B options include the Social Club restaurant and lounge, which serves casual European cuisine, spirits, wine and champagne; the Social Pool Bar, an outdoor lounge by the swimming pool; Saigon Kitchen, offering authentic street food-inspired Indochine and European cuisine; and Café des Beaux-Arts, which serves coffee and cocktails.

Meanwhile, Le Spa des Artistes provides guests with luxurious spa treatments, while those looking for a workout may visit the hotel's fitness facility or take a dip in the infinity pool. For business or private events, the hotel offers two function rooms which can accommodate up to 200 people for small meetings, banquets or cocktail receptions.

WHAT'S NEW



1 SpiceRoads' Ho Chi Minh City Trail Bike Tour

Available in January, March, April, September, November and December this year, this 11-day 922km guided bike tour follows the Ho Chi Minh City trail, a former supply route used by the Vietnamese during the second Indochina war in the late 1960s. Starting from Hanoi and ending in Hue, the tour offers real Vietnamese experiences in rural and touristic regions along with exciting cycling challenges.

2 Oxalis Adventure Tours' Son Doong Cave Expedition

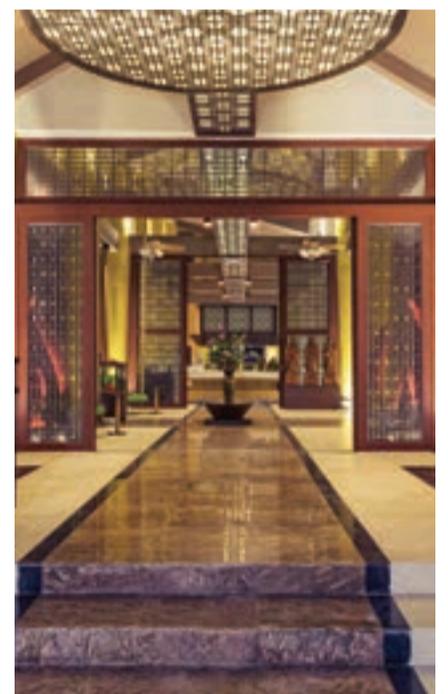
Available from February to August this year, the five-day adventure takes visitors on a dive into Son Doong Cave. A maximum of 10 participants is allowed per departure, and strict health and fitness rules apply as the programme is challenging.

The regular expedition costs US\$3,000 per person, while two special photography tours, available in January and April, cost an extra US\$1,000 per pax.

3 Mercure Phu Quoc Resort & Villas

Located five minutes by car from Phu Quoc International Airport, this newly refurbished hotel on Truong Beach is the second hotel on the island of Phu Quoc by AccorHotels.

Opened in August 2015, the property offers 72 villas with private terraces. The luxurious beachfront Executive Pool Villas are built with private swimming pools with underwater lounge chairs and bathrooms with Jacuzzi tubs.



From top: Son Doong Cave Expedition; Mercure Phu Quoc Resort & Villas

4 Vietnam Helicopter Corporation Private Helicopter Tours

Available since July 2015, the helicopter tours take tourists to northern and central Vietnam on a EC130T2 aircraft which can accommodate up to six passengers per flight.

Routes include Hanoi to Halong Bay (1.5 hours) or Hanoi to Sapa (3.5 hours), during which passengers can enjoy the spectacular landscape of Vietnam.



The Royal Pavilion



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Top 10 online stories in 2015



*Based on eyeviews

1 Trade urges stronger promotion of Garuda Indonesia's holiday passes

Singapore, October 26, 2015

Industry players had mixed feelings when Garuda Indonesia began offering heavily-discounted packages on themed Indonesian holidays, called the Visit Wonderful Indonesia Pass, for inbound tourists. Flying the Jakarta-Denpasar-Surabaya-Semarang-Jakarta route would usually cost US\$531, but only US\$231 with the pass.

While agents and suppliers alike welcomed the initiative, they also wondered why they were not first consulted to come up with itineraries collaboratively. Promotional and trade engagement opportunities were also missed because of the lack of cooperation, most interviewed said.



flight away, especially to places where awareness of Singapore was lower. Cities in Australia, South Korea, Taiwan and the UAE as well as secondary cities in China, India and Indonesia were targeted.

5 Rebranded Malaysia Airlines gets green light to take off

Sepang, August 31, 2015

Malaysia Airlines (MAS) took on a new moniker since September 1, 2015 as the beleaguered national carrier restructures into a new company and undergoes a major rebranding to shake off the taint of a string of disasters.

Having fulfilled the requirements to receive the Air Operator Certificate from the Department of Civil Aviation in Malaysia, MAS was given the thumbs up to operate as Malaysia Airlines Berhad (MAB) during a ceremony at Malaysia's Ministry of Transport in Putrajaya on August 28.

statement who had a hand in shaping the nation's tourism sector. Lee passed away peacefully at the Singapore General Hospital on March 23, 2015 at 03.18. He was 91.

B2C travel fair Travel Revolution 2015 and a launch event by Asiatravel.com were both voluntarily postponed to honour a weeklong period of national mourning, while Changi Airport Group had posted a heartfelt tribute for Lee on the Singapore Changi Airport website.

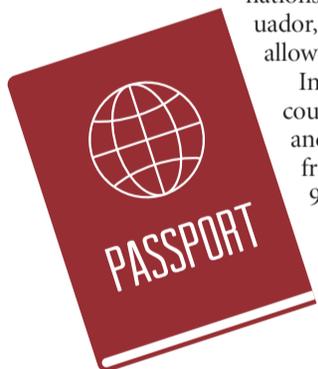


2 Finally, visa-free entry to Indonesia

Jakarta, June 15, 2015

Indonesia had made good on its promise to drop visa requirements in June last year to citizens of 30 countries including China, Japan, South Korea and the US. Prior to this, only ASEAN member nations plus Chile, Morocco, Peru, Ecuador, Hong Kong and Macau were allowed visa-free entry.

In October 2015, another 45 countries, including Taiwan, India and France, were granted visa-free access, resulting in a total of 90 countries now requiring no visas when entering Indonesia. Cruise and yacht access were also eased with Indonesia lifting its maritime cabotage restrictions.



6 Visa-free arrival through all Philippine points of entry for Indians with AJACSSUK visas

Manila, May 5, 2015

To boost inbound traffic from India, the Philippines in April 2015 began granting visa-free entry through all airports and ports to Indian travellers who have US, Japan, Australia, Canada, Schengen, Singapore or UK (AJACSSUK) visas or permanent residency. Travellers were still only allowed to stay for 14 days, which may be extended to a maximum length of 21 days.



9 NATAS fair suffers decline in exhibitor booths

Singapore, March 6, 2015

The first installment of NATAS Travel 2015 fair had opened to the public with a dramatic drop in exhibitor and booth numbers, following the mass exodus of major outbound travel agencies from the fair due to multiple disagreements. NATAS Travel 2015 offered 92 exhibitors and over 330 booths, diving almost 50 per cent from its last installment held in September 2014, which featured 1,226 booths and 165 exhibitors, and which drew over 56,000 visitors.

More than 50 brands including major outbound travel agencies Chan Brothers Travel, Dynasty Travel, CTC Travel and SA Tours instead held a new rival travel fair, branded as Travel Revolution, with two installments held each year akin to NATAS Travel.

3 New Thai association to chase the big fat Indian wedding market

Bangkok, March 19, 2015

The Thai Indian Wedding Association (TIWA) was formed early in 2015 by a group of industry suppliers and hoteliers to provide a singular voice for the emerging but fragmented Indian wedding market in Thailand. Its first order was to encourage airlines, hotels, venues, restaurants, wedding planners and other suppliers to join TIWA and had aimed for 150 to 200 members within its first year.



7 Malaysia eyes South Asian destinations other than India

New Delhi, February 10, 2015

The Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board had aimed for 1.2 million tourists from South Asia, including 800,000 arrivals from India, in 2015. To achieve that goal, the NTO marketed destination Malaysia to countries beyond India, noting that Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan were seeing strong growth with year-on-year increments of 54.1 per cent, 18.7 per cent and 12.7 per cent respectively.

4 GTA partners major hotels to drive Singapore arrivals

Singapore, April 24, 2015

In a bid to reverse Singapore's arrivals decline, 22 hoteliers who operate in the city-state partnered with global travel distributor GTA to begin offering more affordable, packaged deals to source markets within seven hours

8 Singapore tourism sector pays tribute to Lee Kuan Yew

Singapore, March 24, 2015

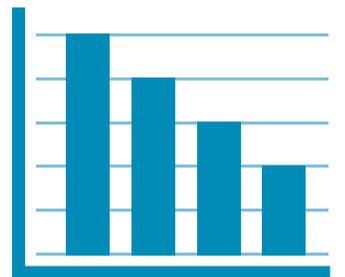
As Singapore mourned the passing of its first and longest-serving prime minister, Lee Kuan Yew, the travel industry likewise marked the loss of the senior

10 Singapore enforces compulsory insurance option to safeguard against travel consultant insolvency

Singapore, June 15, 2015

All licensed travel agents in Singapore must ask outbound leisure customers if they would like to purchase travel insurance covering travel agency insolvency since July 15, 2015, applicable on a per person basis whenever a consumer makes a deposit or payment of S\$500 (US\$371) or above, or purchases a travel package costing S\$1,000 or more.

This mandate by Singapore Tourism Board (STB) came on the back of a slew of sudden closures by travel agencies such as Asia-Euro Holidays and Five Star Tours. A total of 86 travel agencies had shuttered in the first five months of 2015 alone, according to STB, and this number looked set to exceed the 114 that ceased operations in 2014.





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Snapshots

Buyers show up in force

By Eugene Tang



Flag Travel Services India's Vinay Arora, Classis Travel & Tours India's Jayshree Negandhi, Vietrade Tours & Travels India's Nidhi Kapur and Welcome Tours India's Ankur Kalra



Prime Services Germany's Stefan Baier, Alternativ Tours Hotel & Event Service Germany's Jenny Rosaes and First Class Business Travels Netherlands' Gert Bakker



Trade Global Marketing Tours South Africa's Ayo-dele Oyenyin and Gecko Promotions Germany's Henry Waltz



ICP Group Poland's Krzysztof Michniewicz and Tape Tevoador Portugal's Joao Tavares Goncalves



Proxima Travel & Tours Malaysia's Julian Ibrahim and Lotus Asia Tours Singapore's Mauro Del Vento



Almabus Business Travel Poland's Andrzej Babjew



Asfalea Travel Netherland's S H Oei



Royal Brunei Airlines' Jenny Koo and Tan Chia Heng



Puri Santrian Indonesia's Made Suardana, TUI Group Germany's Philippe Peere, Bali Rani Hotel's Anton Adijaya and Santrian Resorts and Villa Indonesia's Mery



Exact Travel Club Romania's Razvan Dabuleanu



BeMyGuest Singapore's Andrew Tan



Golden Tour & Convention Vietnam's Trinh Thi Ha Linh and Peter Pham Tien Dung



Diamond Service DJ&M Consulting Italy's Michelina Gabrie Sanquest



Total Travel International Travel Service China's Suqi Wang

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Snapshots

Serenaded in the Philippines

By Eugene Tang



Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau's Patumwadee Viyapat, Pattanachai Singhavara, Nichapa Yoswee and Wiparat Tharateepab



TTG Asia Media Singapore's Michael Chow and Tourism Promotion Board Philippines' Susana Del Mundo



Grand Andaman Myanmar's Myo Win Than, Ministry of Tourism & Culture Malaysia's Ong Hong Beng, Singapore Tourism Board's Leong Yue Kheong, Ministry of Tourism Indonesia's I Gde Pitana, Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism Laos' Souh Manivong, ASEAN-Korea Centre's Kim Young-sun, Taylor's University Malaysia's Victor Wee, ASEAN Secretariat's Tran Don Phuong and ASEAN-Korea Centre's Muhamad Daud



Ministry of Tourism Indonesia's Dini Andriani, Kezia Stephanie, Rakhman Priyatmoko and Priya Falaha



UNWTO Spain's Xu Jing, TTG Asia Media Singapore's Darren Ng, Ministry of Hotels & Tourism Myanmar's Tint Thwin, Department of Tourism Philippines' Benito Bengzon, PATA Thailand's Mario Hardy, Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation's Roman Skorry, PATA Thailand's Halona Padiachy and India Tourism Singapore's Rajendra Kumar Suman



ASEAN-Korea Centre's Lee Soo Kim, Honghye Sun and Sarah Nayoung Moon



Top: Tourism Promotion Board Philippines' Domingo Ramon Enerio and Cachet Consulting South Africa's Anita Mendiratta. Seated: ASEAN-China Centre's Tri Purnajaya and World Travel & Tourism Council UK's Helen Marano



Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) Tourism Promotion Center's Judy Nguyen, Vietnam National Administration of Tourism's Pham Ngoc Diep, People's Committee of Ho Chi Minh City Department of Tourism's Nguyen Thi Anh Hoa and HCMC Tourism Promotion Center's Hannie Nguyen

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TOP REASONS 10 WHY SMX CONVENTION CENTER MANILA IS YOUR VENUE OF CHOICE



1 Amazing Accessibility

There's no place more convenient than being in the Mall of Asia complex where everything you will possibly ask for is right around you – from the Mall of Asia, the Arena, Shrine of Jesus Church, SM by the Bay to the Conrad Hotel Manila!

2

Brisk Walking on Bridges

Wondering what else to do after your events at SMX? Easy! With elevated foot bridges connecting SMX to the Conrad Hotel Manila and to the Mall of Asia where a walkway is also linked to the Arena, wandering around the complex is as easy as abc, making the most of your stay in the metro!

3

Trouble-free Transportation



If you are about to go to SMX Manila, here's what you need to know – within the complex are two key public transport terminals with a number of means for you to choose from in getting in, out and around the complex! To top it all off – SMX is less than three kilometers away from the central stations of the Metro Rail Transit (MRT) and the Light Rail Transit (LRT) and a mere 6 kilometers from the domestic and international airports via the new skyway!

4

Prestigious Partners

Whether you are organizing an exhibit, corporate or social function, SMX has partnered with only the best contractors, audio visual and sound and light providers, top tier caterers and hotels and other support services that will help you make your event a big success!

5

Huge Halls

Imagine a 9,130 square meters of space - so big you can fit 10,000 people in it! Yes, that's how expansive our halls are that you can stage the best crowds for concerts, conventions, even a circus! Not to mention industry expositions showcasing large machinery and equipment or huge automobiles, boats and trailer trucks!

6

Flexible Function Rooms

Turn your creative and wild ideas into reality with our fully-carpeted function rooms that can be transformed to any themed event imaginable! To name a few - weddings, debuts, corporate parties, product launches, scientific seminars, workshops and the like!

7

Modern Meeting Rooms

If you wish you had more privacy with your events, SMX offers modern meeting rooms where you can hold intimate gatherings with select friends, clients or audiences. With 15 cozy spaces to choose from, we are sure to provide you not just the best of our facility but the paramount experience of our service with the privacy you need!

8

Seamless Single-Stop Service

Experience SMX however small or big your event is with unparalleled levels of service from our highly-trained event managers dedicated to help you with your events.

9

Purposeful Packages

For any event you wish to hold, SMX carefully customizes packages to fit your venue requirements, from the most complex of requests to the minutest of details.



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Whether you are in the Metro, or have gone to the southern part of the country, SMX Convention Center properties and tradehalls are present across key locations - Megatrade Hall, SMX Aura, SMX Davao, SMX Bacolod and Cebu Trade Hall - to offer the same distinctive values you have come to expect: X-cellent locations, X-traordinary facilities and X-ceptional service.



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