

ASEAN readies umbrella brand

NTOs collaborate to put flesh on the bones of *Feel the Warmth* campaign

By Mimi Hudoyo

THE promotion of ASEAN under the *Southeast Asia: Feel the Warmth* branding is finally set to hit the ground running, after being plagued by disagreements over the inclusion of the 'ASEAN' word and funding.

A four-year marketing plan has been outlined, with intra-ASEAN travel and arrivals from its dialogue partners being the focus this year, community-based tourism and nature in 2013, MICE in 2014, and long-stay senior travellers in 2015.

Tourism Authority of Thailand deputy governor Asia and South Pacific, Sansern Ngaurungs, told the *Daily* that the

working group is hammering out an action plan, and that programmes are expected to be up and running by the first quarter.

The annual budget is US\$200,000, with US\$160,000 going to marketing and promotions and the rest to product development and research.

At press time, the proposal drawn up by the ASEAN Marketing and Communication Working Group, led by Thailand, had yet to be endorsed by the ASEAN tourism ministers who were at their meetings. However, this is likely to be approved, given the adoption of the new logo at ATF and the fact that NTOs have already started submitting

marketing highlights to be considered under this branding.

ASEANTA has also agreed to the new tagline and has offered the use of its website, www.southeastasia.org for promotions.

Part of the plan is to "piggyback" on existing activities by the individual NTOs, which have been invited to recommend products to be featured.

Sansern said: "The idea is to pool common products and activities to promote under the banner of ASEAN, *Southeast Asia: Feel the Warmth*."

For instance, playing up the fact that UNESCO heritage sites can be found across ASEAN

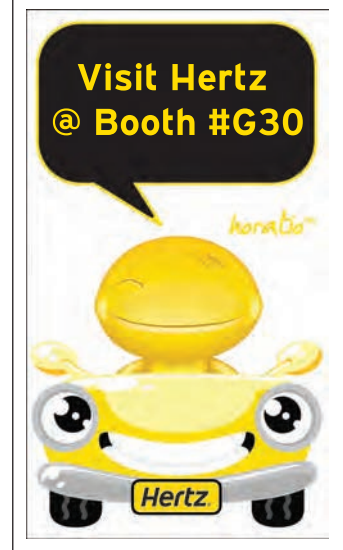
countries is one idea.

Member countries interviewed were supportive of the campaign, explaining that it enhances their marketing efforts.

Indonesia's Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy international tourism marketing director, Nia Niscaya, said: "The strategy is in line with ours. Intra-ASEAN travel is our focus, while China and India are our emerging markets."

"The ASEAN campaign is an extension of what Indonesia is doing."

Philippine Department of Tourism secretary, Ramon R Jimenez, too, said the campaign resonated with the country's des-



ination marketing, the operative word being 'warmth'.

"We hope to leverage on the ASEAN campaign to highlight our tourism strengths – biodiversity, ecotourism, diving, culture and history," he added.

Viewpoint What do you think of the branding?



"The branding enhances individual countries' marketing plans, amplifying their message. It leverages on the unity of ASEAN and allows countries to multiply their destination marketing power."

Md Riza Md Yunos
Deputy permanent secretary
(Industry and Entrepreneurship Development)
Brunei Tourism



"The promotional activities and the delivery of the tourism products and services should fulfil the brand promise, which is *Feel the Warmth*."

Victor Wee
Chairman
Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board



ASEANTA lobbies for bigger role

Participants of ASEANTA's Board Meeting on Tuesday, chaired by president Wiryanti Sukamdani (centre). In an earlier report submitted to the ASEAN NTOs, the association said it had formed the ASEANTA+3 tourism club last year, following in the footsteps of the ASEAN NTOs' collaboration with its dialogue partners, China, Japan and South Korea. ASEANTA has also requested that ATF-related events be managed by the association or a company affiliated to it.

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Let's shake on it – ASEAN's tourism chiefs pledge stronger ties. From left: Myanmar's U Htay Aung, Philippine's Ramon R Jimenez, Singapore's S Iswaran, Thailand's Sombat Kuruphan, Vietnam's Nyugen Van Tuan, Indonesia's Mari Elka Pangestu, Brunei's Yahya Bakar, Cambodia's Thong Khon, Laos' Bosengkham Vongdara, Malaysia's Ng Yen Yen and ASEAN Secretariat's Somsak Pipoppinyo

Seeking closer collaboration

Associations and NTOs exchange ideas and updates, ahead of the ministerial arrivals. **Patrick Tan** drops in



India's NTO takes giant steps forward

Unprecedented moves include equity tie-ups with private sector and regular inter-state dialogue

By Shekhar Niyogi

VISITORS from ASEAN will stand to benefit from a host of new initiatives spearheaded by the India Development Corporation (ITDC), as it aims to bolster tourism infrastructure, attract more hotel investment, strengthen product development and train up human resources needed.



Panwar: forging key partnerships

Revealing that plans would only be formally announced this month, ITDC chairman and managing director Dr Lalit K Panwar said the Indian NTO would set up a

joint venture company called Ashok Infra, in collaboration with Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services. Explaining that India's tourism infrastructure was still underdeveloped in comparison to ASEAN countries, Panwar said the new company would be in charge of road expansions, beachfront facilities, places of interest and more. Funded by the Ministry of Tourism, state governments would also be active participants.

In another first, ITDC will enter into three-way equity ventures with state governments and hospitality companies to develop hotels. Having owned and ran its hotels independently with limited success, the NTO now wants states to identify suitable land sites and provide them at low prices to invite private investment.

Said Panwar: "We want professional hospitality companies to run these hotels profitably."

Two projects are underway, with one in Agartala, capital of Tripura, and the other in Anandpur Sahib, Punjab.

Said Fortune Select Loudon hotel general manager Amitava Guha Thakurta: "It is a welcome move because we will have access to viable building sites and no search process is involved. Infrastructure development will be minimal as the states will ensure that aspect is taken care of. NTO and state tourism involvement will also help bring more tourist traffic as they will showcase the property apart from our own marketing efforts."

Added Punjab Heritage and Tourism Promotion Board executive director Vidya B Kumar: "This new initiative works well,

as it gives incentives to the private sector to invest, backed by infrastructure and support provided by the government."

On the product front, ITDC will launch the first Incredible India Forum in mid-February, bringing together state tourism

chiefs who will collaborate on "multi-state destination packages for tourists", said Panwar. Seeing opportunities in rail tourism, ITDC will also partner the Indian Railway Catering & Tourism Corporation to create packages and upgrade facilities.

To supply the growing tourism industry with manpower, Panwar also shared that ITDC plans to start a university for hospitality and tourism studies in five years' time, converting all 16 Ashok hotels that it currently runs into hotel schools.

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Numbers that matter

66 The total number, in million, of international visitor arrivals to ASEAN countries in 2011 – more than 66 million with 11 per cent growth from 2010, based on preliminary figures submitted.

7 The number, in million, of visitors from ASEAN member states to China, Japan and South Korea – the Plus Three countries – in 2010. In 2009, the figure was 6.6 million. Last year's figure is not available. China accounted for more than 70 per cent of the total number, followed by South Korea then Japan.

12 The number, in million, of visitors from the Plus Three countries into ASEAN member states in 2010. This is the highest figure in the last five years.

A completely new DoT

Philippines' new tourism secretary blows winds of change to the destination's strategy

By Linda Haden

NEW Philippine tourism secretary Ramon R Jimenez has instituted changes that will revitalise the destination's tourism performance, starting with a marketing strategy that relies heavily on going viral.

Speaking with the *Daily*, Jimenez said: "We are going to do things differently now. The Department of Tourism (DoT) is going to initiate more aggressive marketing communications and initiatives that will reinvigorate the tourism industry and shift attitudes."

DoT's first move was to unveil a new destination branding on January 6. Unlike its previous incarnations, the current campaign, *It's More Fun in the Philippines*, focuses first on the domestic market before it is launched internationally.

The secretary said it was crucial to first gain local support for any new global tourism market-



Jimenez: doing things differently

ing initiative, a painful lesson DoT learned from its last branding exercise, which saw the *Pilipinas Kay Ganda* campaign axed after mass criticism in 2010.

In line with this premise, DoT has introduced a social media campaign showcasing the new branding and asking Filipinos to post what they think is fun about their country. A partner website, *itsmorefuninthephilippines.com* supports the campaign.

Jimenez hopes the new campaign will reposition DoT's role. "Previously it was not seen as a source of inspiration, but as a source of funds. It should be perceived as the primary selling unit of a country, not just an administrative one," he said.

Marisa Nallana, chairman, Philippine Association of Convention/Exhibition Organizers and Suppliers, said the concept was great and it was "high time"

Filipinos showed their expertise in customer service to the world.

Henry Lee, EDSA Shangri-La Hotel general manager, believed the new campaign would appeal to the new generation of savvy travellers who appreciate "traditional tourist attractions captured in stunning photography with modern, easily understandable copy".

Adopting a hands-on approach, DoT will evaluate packages sold by travel professionals to ensure that "they are reflective of the new branding and resonate with target markets", which means weeding out packages that

are "not fun", such as overpriced, tired or inconvenient ones. Evaluations will be made through meetings and workshops with local and foreign travel experts from primary inbound sources including the US, South Korea, Japan, China and ASEAN.

As well, DoT is lobbying for a loosening of visa restrictions: for instance, extending the validity of tourist visas from 21 to 30 days in line with other ASEAN destinations and granting visas on arrival to those from the US, Japan, the UK and Australia. — *Additional reporting by Marianne Carandang*

Title tattle Bring on the fun

Filipinos can add wit to their list of qualities. In the week-end following the launch of the destination's new branding campaign, meme-maker websites have sprung up, allowing locals to express their own interpretations of the slogan.

Creations include a photo of a school of fish in Palawan that came with the tagline: Rush hour. It's more fun in the Philippines. Another read: Planking. It's more fun in the Philippines, with a photo of a roasted pig on a spit, a local delicacy.

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ASEAN eTravel Mart expands

THIS year's ASEAN eTravel Mart, an annual event organised by the Bangkok-based Tourism Technology Association (TTA) with support from ASEANTA, is set to be bigger in scale and see more participation from both regional and overseas travel industry stakeholders.

The inaugural edition, held in Bangkok last March, attracted about 600 buyers from Southeast Asia and Australia on the lookout for online distribution channels for their businesses, double the initial target of 300.

This year's event, scheduled to be held in Bangkok sometime in August/September, will have a conference, exhibition and seminars/workshops spread over two days, up from a one-day exhibition/conference and half-day workshop previously.

In addition, TTA is seeking to grow the participant mix with tourism stakeholders from coun-

tries which have cooperative agreements with ASEAN, such as the US, the UK, Japan, South Korea, China, India and Russia.

Apichai Sakulsureeyadej, president, TTA, said one area that would be improved was the exhibition segment, as the association aimed to attract more sellers. Last year, some 40 sellers comprising mainly tourism-related software and technology providers and regional hotel chains were involved, far fewer than expected.

"This year, we are focusing on how to get members of ASEANTA and various ASEAN NTOs actively involved in pushing the private sector to participate in the mart," he said.

Apichai added that TTA was also looking to rotate the host country on an annual basis, with Malaysia having already indicated interest in hosting next year's event. — **Brian Higgs**



ASEAN Plus Three gets down to work

At the NTO meeting, China National Tourism Administration's Zhang Xinhong (far left), Japan Tourism Agency's Yoshio Yamamoto (third from right) and Korea Tourism Organization's Kwon Jong Sool (second from right) presented updates on tourism initiatives involving ASEAN. These include the launch of an ASEAN-China Centre last November and complimentary booths offered during CITM 2011.



AirAsia sets sights to be ASEAN flag bearer

By Brian Higgs

AIRASIA has taken several steps to enhance its image as an ASEAN airline, including joining ASEANTA last year as a chapter member and recently opening a dedicated ASEAN outreach office in Jakarta.

V Raman Narayanan, regional head, ASEAN affairs and government relations, AirAsia, explained that the AirAsia ASEAN office was a means to broaden the low-cost carrier's branding as a "Truly ASEAN" airline, and

to extend its outreach to regional tourism stakeholders.

Scheduled to officially launch on February 22, the office's location in the Indonesian capital is also expected to foster AirAsia's relationship with the Jakarta-based ASEAN Secretariat, and help the carrier get across its ideas on developing regional aviation and tourism.

"We want to invest in the region as a whole instead of just one country," he said. "AirAsia is already established as the domi-



Narayanan: think regional

nant airline in ASEAN."

"Having an office outside our Malaysia (corporate) headquarters will allow us to better establish ourselves as an ASEAN company with a regional rather than national outlook."

He added: "Being in Indonesia

will allow us to tap its burgeoning outbound travel market, not to mention the location being ideally positioned between India and China."

According to Narayanan, AirAsia's ASEANTA chapter membership will also enable the carrier to have a greater say in regional tourism development. ASEANTA took pains to amend its constitution to allow AirAsia's entry as a chapter member, since only national flag carriers were allowed onboard previously.



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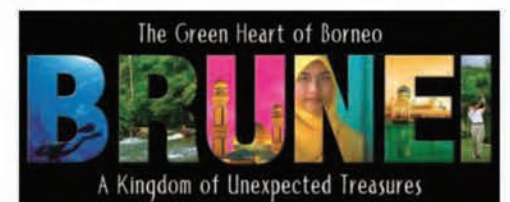
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Kelabat Mountain

Access is the challenge

MICE is a springboard for North Sulawesi to target leisure market, reports **Mimi Hudoyo**

Arrivals Events play a big role in boosting arrivals to Manado and the rest of North Sulawesi, as statistics show.

Arrival numbers hit a high in 2009, when North Sulawesi hosted the World Ocean Summit with some 5,000 delegates. Arrival numbers more than doubled, from 442,000 in 2008 to 933,000 in 2009, with international tourists totalling 52,000.

Arrivals dropped to 355,000 (with 31,000 international arrivals) in 2010, while numbers between January and September 2011 exceeded all of 2010 with 399,000 (31,050 international), thanks to big- and medium-sized conferences.

Mapanget Megah Wisata Tours and Travel managing director, Reinaldo Wangkar, said that MICE events had supported local tourism and, hopefully, would also help to boost the leisure market.

NTO Apart from the North Sulawesi Tourism Board (NSTB), launched three years ago to market and promote the province, the Manado municipal government has also formed a body to promote the city.

Manado Tourism Board chairman Jonathan Mokalu said: "The fact that the municipal govern-

ment formed the board showed there is an awareness of the importance of tourism.

"There is the need to create more awareness of Manado and its potential both to the Indonesian and international travellers. We would like to encourage the industry to go out there and promote their products. Therefore, participation at domestic and international travel marts will be part of our marketing plan."

Access Accessibility is a challenge Manado is working to overcome.

The destination is well connected within Indonesia, with Garuda Indonesia, Lion Air, Sriwijaya Air and Batavia Air providing connections to major and secondary cities. However, while Manado's Sam Ratulangi Airport is an international gateway, currently only SilkAir serves regionally, connecting it with Singapore four times a week.

Accor Malaysia Indonesia Singapore general manager sales Atman Ferdy said he had tried to promote Manado to those holidaying in Bali but "the problem is the flight connection". "Travellers need to fly from Bali to Makassar to connect to Manado, but the connecting time with Garuda is four hours. It is too short to do a city tour, but too



"The move to focus on MICE is proven to be the right one for Manado."

Soewarno
General manager
Swiss-Bel Maleosan

long to sit around at the airport. Garuda has said that when they have more aircraft they would rearrange the schedule," he said.

Safari Tours & Travel manager Erick Rarumangkay said: "Currently, we rely on SilkAir to bring in inbound tourists here. What we need are direct flights from places like China, Taiwan and South Korea to boost traffic from these markets here."

Manado previously had charter flights from Taiwan, and Rarumangkay hoped such services could return.

Hotels Hotel Aryaduta has taken over the management of the former Ritz Hotel Manado, making it the group's second property on Sulawesi Island after Hotel Aryaduta Makassar in the capital of South Sulawesi.

The 207-room hotel has been refurbished, upgraded and renamed Hotel Aryaduta Manado.

Hotel Aryaduta Group CEO, Jessy Quantero, said: "The eastern part of Indonesia is developing to become an iconic destination for the country, and we want to be part of it.

"The hotel has a good location, the only hotel in the city which is near the beach, and it has a ballroom which can cater for up to 1,000 people, so we can cater for MICE, business and leisure mar-

kets all at once."

Manado has 1,784 hotel rooms in the three- to five-star range within the city and surrounding areas and a convention centre which can accommodate up to 5,000 delegates.

Most hotels have meeting rooms, with capacity ranging from 50 to 5,000 seats. Hotels have been running above 80 per cent occupancy.

Products A host of new attractions are slated for completion in 2012.

Apart from Bunaken and the surrounding dive spots, which have been the major draw for North Sulawesi, the local trade is developing special-interest and eco-tourism products.

Safari's Erick said: "We have developed and introduced trekking in Tangkoko Nature Reserve to see the black macaques and spectral tarsiers, and the response is positive. You don't need to be a pro to take the tour – even a seven-year old can do this."

Gardenia Country Inn in Tomohon, approximately 45 minutes drive from Manado, has traditional Manadonese cooking classes led by owner and "master chef", Bernadeth Ratulangi.

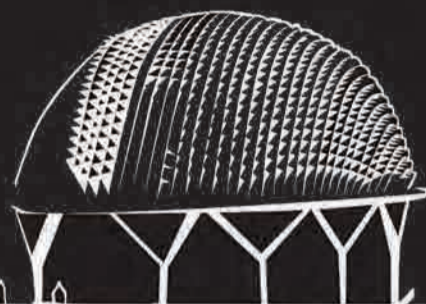
She said: "We basically do tailor-made packages according to the group's needs and requests."



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A veritable heritage

Manado's rich eco offerings and cultural heritage promise an enriching stopover. By **Mimi Hudoyo**



Pinawetengan Museum and House of Textile

Must see

Christ Blessing Statue

This statue of Jesus Christ, the second tallest in Asia and fourth tallest in the world, is an icon of Manado city. Measuring 50m in height, the actual statue is 30m tall, while the pedestal on which it stands is 20m. Consisting of 25 tonnes of metal fibre and 35 tonnes of steel, the monument took nearly three years to build, at a cost of five billion rupiah (US\$540,000). It is located on the peak of the CitraLand residential estate.

Pinawetengan Museum and House of Textile

This museum houses the world's largest trumpet, measuring a massive 32m in length and 5.2m in diameter. The facility also houses the world's biggest *kulintang* (a traditional wooden musical instrument), measuring eight metres in length and 2.5m in height, and some other items holding various world and national records. This is also the place to go if you want to learn about local Pinawetengan textile design.

Pinawetengan Stone

Watu Pinawetengan is a megalithic stone with various irregular scratches on its surface. Resembling an ancient handwritten script, the scratches form shapes resembling human bodies, female and male genitalia, and some other stripes which archaeologists have yet to decipher. The stone is believed to have historical significance to the Minahasa people, and is located on the slope of Mount Soputan in Pinabetengan village, Tompaso district, about 60km from Manado.

Waruga

Waruga are stone sarcophagi used by the Minahasa tribes to place their dead in a squatting position. The practice stemmed from the belief that since humans were born squatting in the mother's womb, they should return to the same position when they pass on. The graves vary in size, depending on the profession or social status of the person buried. The Waruga Park is located in Sawangan village, some 40km from Manado.

Must visit

Linow Lake

The water in this 34ha lake in Tomohon district is constantly changing colour due to its high sulphur content. The colour



Bunaken Island

change depends on the light and viewing angle. The area is also home to a number of endemic animals such as *Biblis* birds.

Tangkoko Nature Reserve

So far, 26 mammal, 18 bird, 15 reptile and over 200 plant species have been documented in this 9,000ha natural rainforest reserve, which is located about two hours' drive from Manado. The reserve is home to animals such as the crested black macaque, spectral tarsier, bear cuscus, hornbill and kingfisher.

Must do

Snorkel/dive in Bunaken National Underwater Park and Lembeh Strait

Bunaken is one of Indonesia's most famous diving and snorkelling destinations, and draws visitors from all over the world. In addition to the banana-shaped Bunaken Island, the 890 km² marine national park also includes the neighbouring islands of Manado Tua (a distinctive cone-shaped extinct volcano), Siladen, Montehagen, Nain and Nain Kecil.

Lembeh Strait is a real macro paradise and a great place to go scuba diving. There are over 50 dive sites around the destination. You may not come across spectacular walls or huge reefs like in Bunaken, but this is where you can catch a glimpse of the mimic octopus, cuttlefish, harlequin shrimp, wonderpus, skeleton shrimp and nudibranch.

Must eat

Tinutuan Porridge

Bubur Tinutuan or Bubur Manado is a rice and vegetable porridge usually eaten

together with chilli and smoked fish. The porridge is made of rice, corn, squash and spinach. A row of restaurants on Jalan Wakeke sells the local delicacy. Bubur Tinutuan was actually the staple dish of local farmers in the old days, when they would bring some rice from home and cook it in the field with whatever vegetables they could find.

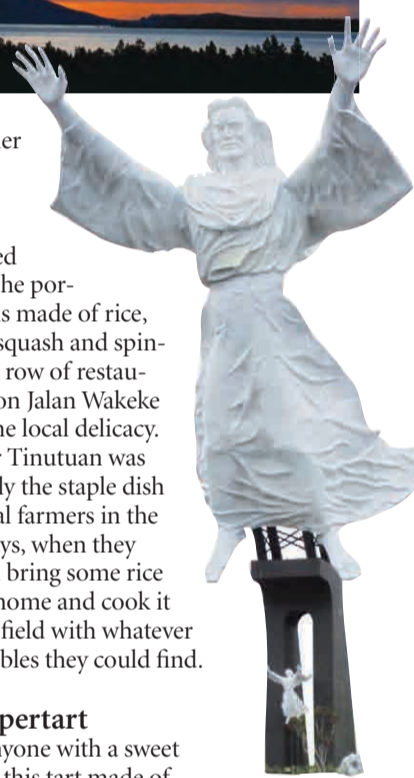
Klappertart

For anyone with a sweet tooth, this tart made of young coconut flesh, raisins and topped with canary nuts is a special dessert dish found in Manado. The popular dish is reminiscent of the Dutch colonial period when the recipe originated.

Must shop

Merciful Building

Open 24 hours a day, Merciful Building is a one-stop shop for products made in North Sulawesi. The various wares on display range from local delicacies including the famous *klappertart* (see above), to drinks, souvenirs, handicraft and traditional cloth. Samples of various food and snack items are available for trying, while the store also provides packaging services for goods purchased there.



Waruga (sulut)

Malaysia's ecotourism gets a boost

With tourism identified as one of the economic drivers for Malaysia, several initiatives have been outlined to leverage on the country's strengths, one of which is its natural biodiversity.

"Endowed with over 15,000 species of flowering plants, 1,500 species of terrestrial vertebrates and about 150,000 species of invertebrates, Malaysia is one of 12 mega biodiversity countries in the world," said YB Dato' Sri Dr. Ng Yen Yen, the Tourism Minister of Malaysia, adding that Malaysia is "upgrading and repackaging key eco-tourism sites nationwide in an effort to turn Malaysia into a global biodiversity hub."

The effort is being spearheaded by the Malaysia Mega Biodiversity Hub board of management led by the Ministries of Tourism and Natural Resources and Environment, which also accredits and monitors an ecotourism site's development and marketing and promotional activities. The board is currently overseeing the following eco-tourism sites:

The Royal Belum State Park, Perak

Relatively unknown and largely unexplored, the Royal Belum is one of Malaysia's best kept secrets. Its 117,500 hectares of pristine mountainous forests protect ecosystems that have evolved over millions of years. Park attractions here include 11 newly discovered waterfalls, 12 salt licks locations and aboriginal settlements from the Negrito and Jahai tribes located deep in the forest.

Mulu National Park, Sarawak

One of Malaysia's World Heritage Sites, Mulu is famous for its rich biodiversity and gigantic limestone caves where millions of swiftlets and bats roost. Its 480-metre canopy skywalk is the longest tree-based walkway in the world while the new Botanical Heritage Walk, a 1,100-metre Belian boardwalk and 400-metre river stone path, allows closer inspection of the flora and fauna.

Tioman Island Marine Park Centre, Pahang

Largest in a group of nine islands, Tioman Island has about 13 dive sites with a maximum depth of about 30 metres. The underwater topography features coral reefs and huge granite boulders, many covered with soft tree corals and sea fans. Fish species in these waters include the Blue Spotted Lagoon Rays, Blue-ringed Angel Fish, Six Banded Angel Fish, manta rays, turtles, black tip sharks and whale sharks.

The Pulau Tioman Marine Park Centre is the largest in Malaysia with a laboratory, jetty, various camping sites, gazebos, barbecue pits and restroom facilities for visitors. With the recent construction of a ramp, handrail and wheelchair accessible restroom, the centre is also disabled-friendly.

Taman Negara Kuala Tahan, Pahang

The 4,342 sq. km. national park is a fully-protected area and home to

one of the richest and most complex ecosystems in the world. Its canopy walkway (30 metres high and 500 metres long) gives visitors a view of the jungle from above. Visitors can also enjoy swimming, bird watching, camping, jungle trekking, wildlife observation, mountain climbing, cave exploration and fishing activities.

A five-kilometre long boardwalk, built to reduce soil erosion and manage

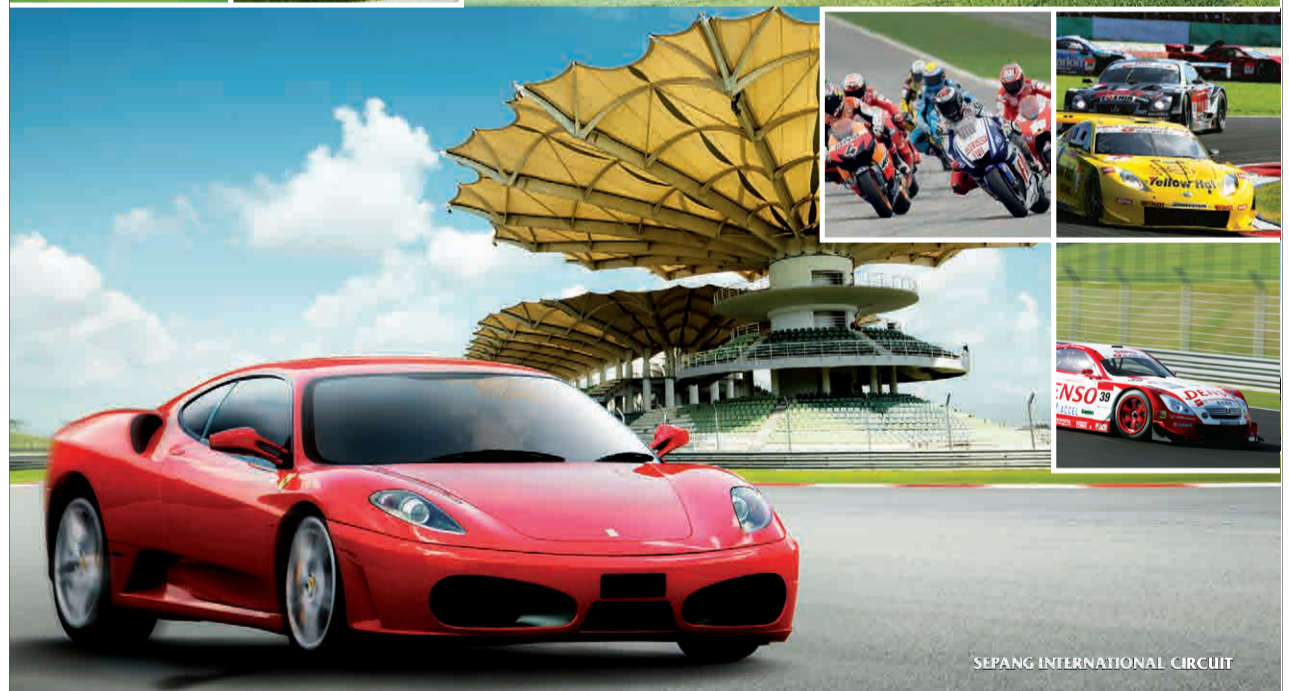
tourists' access, is due for completion in June 2012.

National Elephant Conservation Centre in Kuala Gandah, Pahang

The National Elephant Conservation Centre is a base for the Elephant Relocation Team, which began the elephant translocation programme in 1974.

Tourists can ride, feed and bathe the elephants and watch screenings of the centre's translocation efforts. The latest addition to the park services is the elephant ride into the tropical jungle – an outreach programme to educate the public about the importance of the species and habitat protection.

For more information on Malaysia's tourist attractions, visit www.tourismmalaysia.gov.my.



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Sun, sea, sand and more

Beach destinations are adding attractions as competition across the region heats up



Courtesy of Tanjung Rhu Resort Langkawi

Malaysia



Penang in top ten

Penang received a massive boost in 2011 when it was named by Yahoo! Travel as one of “the 10 islands to explore before you die”.

Highlighted among the island’s attractions were its “unique fusion of cultures and flavours, local architecture – which ranges from modern high-rises to buildings built by 19th-century British colonialists – and beach resorts, preserved mangroves, small fishing villages and a share of temples, mosques, and churches”.

Asian Overland Services Tours & Travel director of sales, Andy Muniandy, said: “Penang is a destination which has something for everybody – food, beach and heritage. It is also a family-orientated destination with its street markets, restaurants and food offerings.”

The UNESCO World Heritage Site listing for the Upper Penang Road area has also been a boon for the destination. Muniandy said: “Travellers look out for such listings. It has generated good publicity for the island. The Cheong Fatt Sze (Blue) mansion has also been mentioned as a must-visit site in magazines globally.”

Forthcoming developments for the island include the opening of Malaysia’s first Amanresort in 2014. It will be on the site of the existing colonial-era Crag Hotel, built on Penang Hill in 1929. This is expected to raise Penang’s profile as a luxury destination to woo high-value tourists.

The Penang state government awarded the 37 million ringgit (US\$12.3 million) redevelopment project to local company Sri Nisuh.

Amancrag will offer 20 double-storey villas, with sweeping views of the island. There would also be an international-class health and spa facility.

Penang Municipal Council has new guidelines to regulate beach activities for the security and safety of tourists. Among the measures is the creation of a special zone for jet skis at Batu Ferringhi beach. Malaysian Association of Hotels Penang Chapter president, Marco Giovanni Battistotti, said this would boost family travel to Ferringhi beach and bring back many visitors. – **N. Nithyananthan**



Malaysia

Langkawi boosted

Already one of Malaysia’s top tourism destinations, Langkawi has enjoyed a major shot in the arm with an allocation of RM420 million (US\$140 million).

The cash injection is aimed at turning the island into an international standard tourist destination and helping to increase foreign tourist arrivals in the country.

The Langkawi Five-Year Tourism Development Master Plan’s main initiatives include restructuring the Langkawi Development Authority (Lada), establishing a forest ranger team, upgrading the museum, beach and commercial areas, and providing a more efficient public transportation system. It will start to be implemented this year.

Industry sources said the move was timely and would enable Langkawi to compete against other areas in the country which had already stepped up and promoted their own destinations.

Both the Langkawi Tourism Association and Lada have said that the plan could be harnessed to make the island an international green destination by focusing on its natural ecological attractions.

Asian Overland Services Tours director of sales, Andy Muniandy, said that Langkawi – as an archipelago of 104 islands – offered a host of sea-based activities including island hopping.

The new budget was also seen as a catalyst to attract investors. Lada general manager, Datuk Azman Umar, said that based on a tourism blueprint prepared by the Economic Planning Unit (EPU), the cash injection would help to attract more investors to the island.

As a strategy, it has already paid dividends. In November, Berjaya Air announced it was adding Langkawi to its network with four flights a week direct from Subang Airport from November 18.

The company was also working closely with resorts and hotels to provide travel packages for their clients. – **N. Nithyananthan**



Singapore

Sentosa soars

Sentosa welcomed 9.2 million visitors in the first half of 2011, 18 per cent more than in the same period in 2010. Outside of Resorts World Sentosa (RWS), domestic travellers were 49 per cent of visitors to the island.

Although China, Indonesia, the Philippines and Malaysia remain the key growth foreign source markets, according to Suzanne Ho, communications director, Sentosa Leisure Group, there had also been an increase in visitors from Vietnam.

Ho said: “We have observed a trend away from facilitated, group travel to free and independent travel, with more of our overseas guests making their own travel plans.”

A target of 20 million visitors has been set for the 2011-12 financial year.

Sentosa had 2,800 rooms spread across 11 hotels and resorts. This is anticipated to increase to more than 3,200 when three new hotels open in 2012 – W Hotel Sentosa Cove, RWS Equarius Hotel and RWS Spa Villas.

Shangri-La Rasa Sentosa reopened in January after undergoing a US\$60 million refurbishment. The five-star Mövenpick Heritage Hotel Sentosa, which is divided into two wings, became fully operational in April 2011.

The world’s largest wind tunnel for indoor skydiving, iFly Singapore, and Universal Studios Singapore, held their official openings in May 2011. The theme park now features 21 rides and shows.

As part of the Sentosa Leisure Group’s master plan, Palawan beach, to the east of Sentosa, has been earmarked for further development.

The Palawan Walk, formerly the Palawan Link, will feature an 800m landscaped walkway. The centrepiece will be a water-play area targeted at under-10s featuring a giant pirate ship, with a family restaurant and kids club. Also on the cards is the extension of the Imbiah Lookout to include more retail and food and beverage options. These are scheduled for completion in 2012.

Sentosa’s internal cableway network is also expected to be operational in 2014. – **Linda Haden**



Indonesia

Lombok is looking up

Big events, such as the Lombok Sumbawa Pearl Festival, have helped attract an increasing number of visitors to Lombok.

West Nusa Tenggara province, which includes Lombok and Sumbawa Islands, is targeting one million arrivals this year – the target for 2011 was 850,000. However, the province's tourism office director, Lalu Gita Aryadi, said: "The one million figure is just a symbolism. We are optimistic that we will achieve more."

Lalu Gita said this was due to successful marketing and the arrival of Russia charter flights. The charters, launched on November 15 by Pegas Touristik and operated by Nordwind Airline, are a series of 13-night, back-to-back services up to May 2012. The regional tourism office and trade have been participating at international travel marts such as WTM in London, and with the newly-formed West Nusa Tenggara Tourism Promotion Board, and a number of roadshows, media and travel professional fam trips have been organised.

Both the NTO and trade are optimistic 2012 will be a good year, with Lombok International Airport which opened October 2011 and a new 1,175 hectare Mandalika Resort project, which will make Lombok an international tourism icon, according to Coordinating Minister for the Economy, Hatta Rajasa. The US\$3 billion resort project is being developed according to the Nusa Dua Resort concept and is part of the central government's economic development strategy.

While it will take a few years before the resort is fully



Mimi Hudoyo



operational, West Nusa Tenggara Regional Tourism Promotion Board's Awan Aswinabawa said: "In the meantime, we are not just sitting and waiting. We have come up with marketing programmes focusing on 'mountain, marine and MICE'. Our focus will no longer only be Lombok. We will also start promoting Sumbawa for special-interest and incentive programmes."

Panorama Destination CEO, Dharma Tirtawisata, said that as the new airport was about 90 minutes from Senggigi, where the majority of hotels are, Lombok would see significant growth when hotels in Mandalika opened.

Pacto business development director, Umberto Cadamuro, said tourism growth was dependant on airlines. "It

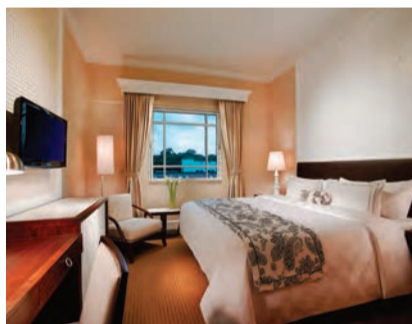
is important that the government and trade approach international airlines to fly there," he said.

Indonesia AirAsia is planning to launch a four-times weekly service between Kuala Lumpur and Lombok. Lalu Gita said: "Apart from Malaysia and Singapore, we would like to attract direct services from Hong Kong and the Middle East."

Lombok currently has some 2,500 rooms in star rated hotels, with approximately 1,500 due to open this year. The most recent opening was the five-star, 125-room Queen Villa & Spa in Gili Trawangan.

The Mandalika Resort is expected to attract international hotel operators, and Indonesian enterprises such Gobel International and Rajawali already have plans for high-end hotels there. – **Mimi Hudoyo**

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Cambodia

Sihanoukville soars

Sihanoukville – a former hangout for the Cambodian elite and more recently a renowned backpacker haven – has been reignited by the relaunch of its airport and the construction of high-end resorts.

Sihanoukville's tourism sector is unanimous in its belief that the launch of flag carrier Cambodia Angkor Air's Siem Reap to Sihanoukville route in December would change the face of tourism to the resort destination in the Bay of Thailand.

Diethelm Travel Cambodia managing director, Pierre Jungo, said: "We can expect Sihanoukville to get much more attention than it has seen in recent years. Until now, it has been a difficult destination to reach.

"However, limitations in the number of hotel rooms available could cause problems."

He said the beach resort currently had only two hotels with four-star or above ratings – Independence Hotel and Sokha Beach Resort.

Although recent reports suggested that cruise ship arrivals fell 31 per cent year-on-year, Sihanoukville had seen a steady rise in arrivals over recent years, according to Jungo.

"Sihanoukville can attract more visitors with an increase in advertising to raise awareness. The opening of Song Saa Resort in February will offer international exposure to the rest of the coast," he said.

Members of the hotel sector also welcomed the increase in access. Sokha Beach Resort general manager, Friedhelm Detjen, said: "We sometimes don't have enough rooms available during the high-season, and with the opening of the airport we expect to attract more visitors.



Courtesy of Sirirat Fungkhaphan



"Our new lakeside bungalows will accommodate the predicted growth."

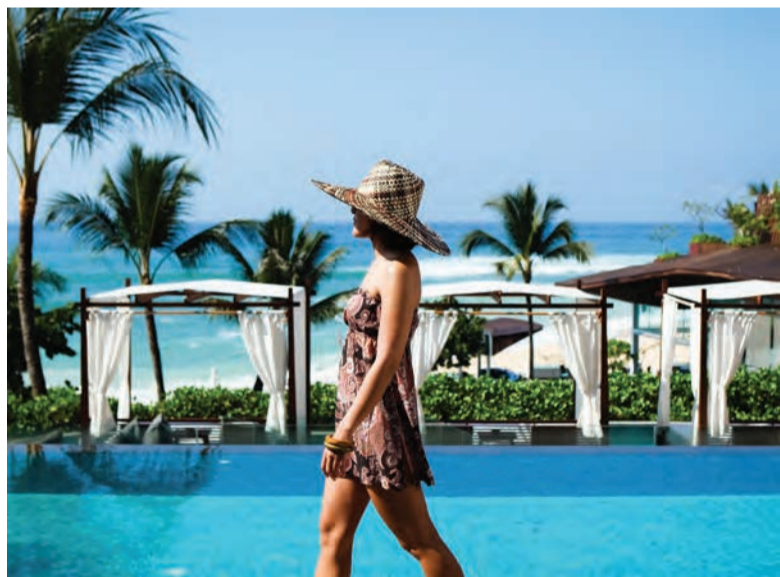
He hoped that Sihanoukville would attract those tourists who in the past would go to Thailand's beaches after taking in the sights of Angkor Wat.

He said that although there was a slight decline in visitors from markets such as Scandinavia, the resort attracted both domestic tourists and customers from Europe,

China and Japan.

Mohan Gunti, advisor to the Cambodia Association of Travel Agents and a member of the government's tourism working group, believed direct flights to neighbouring countries, such as Thailand and Vietnam, would benefit the city and region on the whole.

"The region is expected to attract a high number of tourists and investors, becoming a major province and generating a high income for the economy." – **Liam Barnes**



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Vietnam

Danang centre stage

Danang has stepped into the tourism limelight as a much sought-after destination for both holidaymakers and investors.

The resort's pristine beaches and the trio of UNESCO World Heritage Sites just a daytrip away – the former imperial capital of Hue, the ancient 'Silk Road' trading port of Hoi An and the Hindu temple complex and former spiritual centre of the Champa civilisation at My Son – have made Danang an attractive proposition for both.

The destination's department of culture, sports and tourism said that as of October 2011, there were 278 hotels and resorts offering 9,185 rooms – more than 3,000 of which were new additions.

Among these new properties, eight were five-star establishments with 1,835 rooms, twice as many as in 2010. New properties in other categories included three four-star hotels, 29 three-star and 238 others, offering 496, 1,657, and 5,179 rooms respectively.

As *TTG Asia ATF Daily* went to press, many projects were coming on-line – five five-star hotels with 1,235 rooms, two four-stars with 296 rooms and 15 three-stars with 872 rooms, according to the municipal tourism promotion agency. The department expects another 39 projects with 1,100 rooms to be added in 2012.

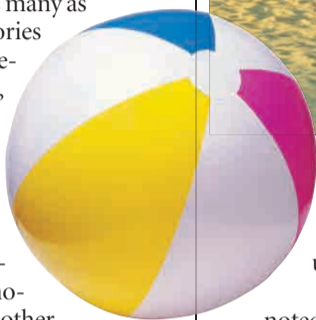
By the end of 2011's third quarter, the number of visitors staying in Danang's hotels had reached more than 1.2 million, a year-on-year increase of 54 per cent on 2010.

The number of international and local visitors had increased by 68 per cent and 51 per cent respectively.

In the first three quarters of 2011, total visitor num-



Courtesy of Nam Hai Danang, Vietnam



bers neared two million, up 33 per cent on the same period in 2010.

Danang is currently the second-most popular destination for domestic tourists.

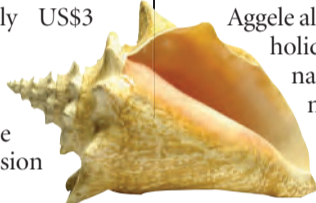
A report from property consultants CBRE noted 55 ongoing tourism projects with total capital investment of approximately US\$3 billion.

The past two years have seen the completion of many luxurious projects along the coastline with names such as Hyatt, The Nam Hai, Accor, InterContinental and Fusion Maia entering the market.

Marco van Aggele, CEO at Serenity Holding, the developer behind Fusion Maia Danang, said: "Danang is already oversupplied and it is harder to enter the market. In order to survive the competition you have to provide a whole new level of values to a new generation of travellers. But it surely is a very exciting time."

Aggele also reported an increasing interest in luxury holidays from the domestic market. A Vietnamese middle class has emerged rapidly and now wants to holiday in high-end resorts.

Fusion Maia Danang had received unexpectedly high numbers of local holidaymakers, he said. – **Chi Mai**



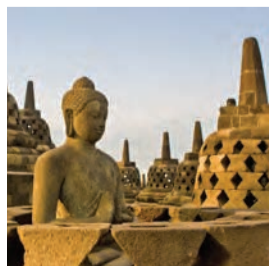
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Thailand ready to rebound

The Thai trade expects tourism to recover quickly once the flood waters recede and the media scare stories stop. Reports by **Sirima Eamtako**



Siam Paragon, Bangkok

Courtesy of Tourism Authority of Thailand

After further political turmoil in May 2010, Thailand waded in more tough waters as the country faced the worst flooding in 50 years during late 2011. Despite recording some declines in bookings during the inundation, industry players expected the natural disaster to have a short-term impact and that tourism will rebound from early 2012.

Industry players expect the flooding to have a short-term impact on Thailand's tourism industry and hope that the market will understand the crisis is a natural disaster and the country will rebound quickly once the waters recede. They believe there is pent-up demand caused by the Thai political crises during the past few years.

CBS Travel Asia CEO, Chaladol Ussamarn, said that cancellations for October and November 2011 were not caused by the deluge but by media coverage that had implied that the whole of Thailand was inundated. The truth was, Suvarnabhumi Airport and most tourism destinations were unaffected.

He said the markets most affected were Europe, China, Japan and South Korea, from where business had been okay up until September but dipped from October as sensational media coverage caused panic among travellers, which was made worse by travel advisories.

"But bookings should return to an 'okay' situation in 2012, although I anticipate overseas buyers will try to pressure Thai tourism players for lower rates," Chaladol said.

Khiri Travel Group co-founder and CEO, Willem Niemeijer, said that after some turbulent months in 2010, business at the company had been better than expected, right up to the deluge.

"Thailand made a great comeback," he said.

Niemeijer said the floods would likely kill any year-on-year growth for Thailand, but for the company, overall it has seen a solid performance after a sluggish 2009 and 2010.

"I believe 2012 will be a good year overall for Khiri Travel," he said.

Destination Asia had also seen growth up to October 2011. Its CEO and managing director, James Reed, said the company had recorded a 13 per cent year-on-year growth in the first 10 months of 2011.

"November was impacted, but there were no cancellations for the high season, which started

from the third week. The corporate sector was affected, but it will likely rebound in January," Reed said.

"Forward bookings for 2012 remain very strong."

Association of Thai Travel Agents (ATTA) president, Sisdavachr Cheewarattanaporn, said the tourism body would urge government agencies to restore the country's image and travellers' confidence in Thailand in a bid to win back group tour bookings and achieve 2012 tourism targets.

His remarks came as ATTA members recorded a rebound in group tour bookings, after facing substantial declines during the Thai political crisis in 2010.

My take

"It is too early to predict how much tourism business was lost but once the floods are gone – Thailand needs to do a big 'Thailand is back' media campaign concentrating on Asia."

Luzi Matzig
CEO, Asian Trails

NTO | Looking to areas with big potential

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) is promoting the country with its new "Miracle Years of Amazing Thailand 2011-2012" campaign.

The branding, which builds on the successful "Amazing Thailand, Always Amazes You" campaign, will focus on events held in conjunction with celebrations to commemorate the 84th and 80th birthdays of the Thai king and queen respectively.

While efforts in key markets – in seven regions – will remain unchanged, the NTO will invest

more on areas with high growth potential, including China, India, Indonesia, Russia and Latin America.

It planned to boost numbers from Latin America, especially Brazil and Argentina.

TAT deputy governor for international marketing - Europe, Africa, Middle East and the Americas, Juthaporn Rerngronasa, said visitor numbers



Rerngronasa: rises likely

from Europe and the Americas were expected to grow by five per cent for 2012 but arrivals from Latin America were anticipated to increase by 20 per cent.

Last year, Thailand recorded approximately 30,000 Latin America arrivals, with 16,753 from Brazil and 9,936 from Argentina. In the first nine months of 2011, visitor numbers from Brazil increased

to 17,000 – a 23 per cent rise compared to the same period in 2010, while visitor numbers from Argentina surged by 30 per cent to 9,500.

TAT deputy governor for international marketing-Asia and South Pacific, Sansern Ngaorungsi, said that the push to regain tourism numbers would begin as soon as the floodwaters in the central provinces receded.

However, he stressed that while travel warnings issued by

China, Taiwan and Hong Kong had caused the cancellation of group tour bookings – mostly to Bangkok – during the October-November flooding, other markets continued to travel to other Thai destinations.

Sansern said tourism should return to normal in early 2012.

Thailand had expected to welcome 19.5 million foreign visitors and earn 747 billion baht in 2011 but the flooding is expected to have pegged that back to 19.1 million and 737 billion baht.



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Hotels | Capital may see a price war

The momentum of new hotel openings in 2011 across Bangkok and other key destinations in Thailand will continue into 2012 and beyond.

In the capital city, 22 new hotels with 4,440 rooms, as well as three rebranded properties with 1,286 rooms, came online prior to the flood crisis. These new rooms join approximately 100,000 existing rooms and come ahead of some 26 hotels and 6,000 rooms which are due to open between 2012 and 2014.

Bangkok's room boom has prompted industry players to expect suppressed room rate growth and a possible price war.

Bangkok hotels ran at 50 to 70 per cent occupancy from January to early-November 2011, and a RevPAR of between 600 baht (US\$19.50) and 1,490 baht.

Destination Asia CEO and group managing director, James Reed, said the floods would have a short-term impact on business, but the room oversupply would make it difficult for Bangkok hotels to see any rate increases and to escape a price war.

However, Reed expects room rates in popular beach destinations such as Koh Samui, Phuket and Krabi to "go up by 10 per cent".

Onyx Hospitality Group senior vice-president, Suravut Thongtham, said the group's properties nationwide would be able to achieve the usual five to seven per cent annual increase in room rates, as pricing structure had become of secondary importance after product quality. He also said that the group did not expect to see any long-term or noticeable demand shifts to other destinations in the country as a result of the floods in the capital.



Le Meridien Koh Samui Resort & Spa

"Bangkok will remain the main destination," he said.

"We also expect to see continued growth within the resort destinations of Koh Samui, Phuket, Koh Chang, Chiang Mai and Krabi."

Phuket added approximately 1,000 new rooms and 450 rebranded rooms last year, after 1,057 new rooms were added in 2010. Phuket had 40,000 rooms in 2010.

Koh Samui welcomed an array of international hotel brands such as Outrigger, Conrad, Le Meridien and InterContinental in 2011, with the opening of six new hotels and 520 rooms. The island's registered supply stood at 14,261 rooms in 2010.

Pattaya, Hua Hin, Krabi and Chiang Mai also received new

hotels and rooms in 2011, on top of 2010's registered supply of 38,729 rooms, 7,015 rooms, 9,985 rooms and 23,292 rooms respectively.

Accor Thailand director of operations, Paul Stevens, said while there was still room for all hotel segments to grow, the chain believed that the midscale and economy segments would lead the way of the kingdom's room boom.

Accor's recent Asia-Pacific Business Traveller Research showed that business travellers in the region spent an average of US\$121 per room night.

"This fits well with our strength in the midscale category where we plan to expand extensively in the coming years," Stevens said.

Destination by the numbers

578 The total number of foreign productions filmed in Thailand in 2010 was 578, generating 1.86 billion baht (US\$60.5 million) in revenue. This was up from 496 films and 897 million baht revenue in 2009. From January to October 2011, 498 foreign productions gave the country one billion baht in revenue.

262 Advertisements topped the foreign production filmings in the first three quarters of 2011, contributing 262 million baht to Thailand's economy, followed by documentaries at 135 million baht and TV series at 72 million baht. Japan, India and Europe were the top three film production teams.

4,078 The average spend per head per day of foreign visitors to Thailand was 4,078 baht in 2010. These visitors stayed 9.12 days on average in 2010, resulting in 592.79 billion baht gross foreign tourism revenue. In 2009, average daily expenditure was 4,011 baht, average length of stay was 8.99 days and total foreign tourism revenue was 510 billion baht.

1,736 The average spend per head per day of domestic tourists was 1,736 baht. They made 101 million domestic trips and stayed 2.59 days on average in 2010, contributing 402 billion baht in domestic tourism revenue. In 2009, the daily spend per day was 1,540 baht, average length of stay was 2.35 days, total domestic trips were 86 million and total domestic tourism revenue was 264.78 billion baht.

3.29 Tourism receipts from the European market in the first quarter of 2011 reached US\$3.29 billion, making it the top foreign tourism generator for Thailand. This was followed by the East Asian market at US\$2.46 billion and the Americas at US\$520 million.

7.42 In 2010, European visitors contributed US\$7.42 billion in tourism revenue to Thailand, up 23.2 per cent over 2009, followed by East Asia at US\$6.56 billion, the Americas at US\$1.44 billion and Oceania at US\$1.34 billion. The country earned a total of US\$18.7 billion in 2010, up 25.71 per cent over 2009.

15.68 European visitors had the longest average length of stay in Thailand in the first quarter of 2011 at 15.68 days, up 0.4 per cent over the same period in 2010. This was followed by visitors from the Americas at 13.9 days, Oceania at 12.97 days and Africa at 11.16 days. Visitors from the country's largest market – East Asia – stayed 6.37 days on average.

113,462 The total of number of flights into Thailand in 2011 was 113,462, including 94,944 direct services. These flights offered some 27.6 million seats. From January to April 2012, the country is expected to handle 37,008 flights with nine million seats.

Sources: Department of Tourism, Ministry of Tourism and Sports and OAG Aviation Solutions Schedules Database for flight information

Airline | Bangkok and Phuket lead the way

Thailand saw a host of new air links and higher frequencies on existing routes, with both the country's main gateways – Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport and Phuket Airport – adding regional and longhaul flights.

Inflight Holidays managing director, Thipnapa Suwanna, said more connections with Indian cities enabled Thai inbound and outbound travel companies to make India both a source market and a destination.

Last year, Bangkok Airways added six-weekly Bangkok-Mumbai and five-weekly Bangkok-Bangalore flights, while

IndiGo Airlines introduced its daily Delhi-Bangkok services. These added to some 140 existing flights between Thailand and India.

From South Korea, T'Way Airlines launched a daily Seoul-Bangkok service in October 2011.

It is now one of many carriers that operate between the countries, including Thai Airways International (THAI), Korean Air, Air Asiana, Jin Air, Jeju Air and Business Air.

THAI also ramped up services between Bangkok and South Korea with the new thrice-weekly

Phuket-Seoul service for the winter season, launched in October 2011. In addition, the flag carrier added Bangkok-Brussels and Bangkok-Copenhagen-Phuket flights – both three times a week – in November 2011.

Brussels is THAI's newest and 72nd destination. The airline expected to capture 12-15 per cent of passengers from Belgium and nearby countries connecting to South-east Asia-bound flights in Frankfurt, said THAI's executive vice-president for commercial, Pandit Chanapai.

More direct air links between Australian cities and Phuket en-

abled Destination Asia (Thailand) to grow the Australian market, as well as retain business events' groups during the recent floods in the central Thai region, said the DMC's managing director, Pornthip Hirunkate.

As well as THAI's Bangkok-Phuket-Perth, Bangkok-Narita-Phuket-Bangkok and daily Bangkok-Phuket services, the southern Thai island is also served by other carriers such as Pacific Blue and Air Australia.

Phuket airport has also attracted more flights from Europe, Russia and China. These included Air China's new four-weekly

Beijing-Phuket flights, which was introduced last November, bringing the carrier's services between Beijing and Thailand to 36 flights per week.

In Koh Samui, the new thrice-weekly Singapore-Samui service is expected to boost demand from corporate customers, said Oriental Events CEO and managing director, Worapot Srabua.

THAI's subsidiary THAI Smile Air is set to kick off in July with flights to five domestic destinations. Positioned as a light-premium carrier, the airline will launch services to cities in China and India from 2013.

Tonsai Bay, Phuket





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its intrinsic Buddhist culture, national and colonial architecture, gastronomy, World Heritage Sites, multi-ethnic people, trekking locations and local handicrafts. Its unparalleled natural landscape has earned Laos the reputation of being the only remaining "original" South-east Asian experience left, and it is just waiting to be discovered.

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Brunei

Malaysia and China dominate

Asia-Pacific contributes the bulk of visitors while UK tops longhaul

Total tourist arrivals into Brunei in 2010 grew by an impressive 36 per cent from 157,464 arrivals in 2009 to 214,290 in 2010.

Malaysia and China again dominated, collectively contributing more than 36 per cent of total arrivals.

ASEAN countries, along with

Australia, New Zealand and India, made up the remaining top 10 source markets during the same year.

Neighbouring Malaysia was by far the biggest source of tourists. Its 54,127 visitors made up 25 per cent of the country's total tourism arrivals number. It was

followed by China which contributed 24,579 arrivals, or 11 per cent of Brunei's total.

Arrival numbers from Malaysia and China in 2010 increased by 46 per cent compared to the previous year.

Other countries generating more than 10,000 arrivals in 2010 were the UK, Australia, Indonesia, Singapore, the Philippines and New Zealand, with 17,416 (eight per cent), 17,237 (eight per cent), 16,343 (eight per cent), 15,973 (seven per cent), 14,720 (seven per cent) and 10,324 (five per cent) tourist arrivals respectively.

India and Thailand also made it to Brunei's top 10 arrivals chart, with 4,904 (two per cent) and 4,589 (two per cent) tourist arrivals respectively.

While the 2010 rankings may have varied slightly compared to 2009, the top 10 lists for both years were identical with one exception: Japan (number nine in 2009) was replaced by India in 2010.

One unique feature of tourist arrivals from markets outside the top 10 in 2010 was the wide mix of source countries contributing about the same number of tourists. They were largely from North America, East Asia and northern Europe.

Countries generating more than 3,000 tourists were the US, Japan and Vietnam with 3,741 (two per cent), 3,637 (two per cent) and 3,301 (1.5 per cent) arrivals respectively.

Countries contributing more than 1,000 tourists were Canada, Taiwan, Germany, South Korea, France, Hong Kong, the Netherlands and Saudi Arabia with 2,199 (one per cent), 1,917 (0.9 per cent), 1,713 (0.8 per cent), 1,712 (0.8 per cent), 1,315 (0.6 per cent), 1,210 (0.6 per cent), 1,127 (0.5 per cent) and 1,021 (0.5 per cent) arrivals respectively.

This was similar to 2009, with the exception of newcomer Saudi Arabia, which joined the list in 2010. – N. Nithyananthan

The biggest market

25

The percentage of total tourism arrivals from neighbouring Malaysia



Bali
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www.baliismylife.com

Grand Hyatt Bali

The 101 Legian

Padma Resort Bali

BALI HOTELS ASSOCIATION

The advertisement features a decorative background with white floral patterns on a grey background. It includes three photographs of hotel properties: Grand Hyatt Bali (a resort with a large pool and colorful flowers), The 101 Legian (a modern building with a pool at night), and Padma Resort Bali (an outdoor lounge area with a view of the ocean at sunset). The Bali Hotels Association logo is in the bottom right corner.

Malaysia

Sticking to big long-term goals

Ecotourism and golf to raise numbers from Europe, US and Australia

Tourism arrivals in 2010 increased by 3.9 per cent to 24.6 million compared to 23.6 million in 2009, and a target of 25 million was set for 2011.

The growth trend continued into early 2011, with January showing a year-on-year



Ng: setbacks hit arrival numbers

increase of 1.2 per cent to 1.92 million arrivals. However by the end of June 2011, arrivals had tapered off to stand at 11.36 million tourists.

Malaysia's tourism minister, Ng Yen Yen, said: "Our market has been affected by developments such as the floods in Bangkok, the economic crises in Europe and the US, and the hike in airport tax in the UK for long-distance flights. As a result we have to adjust our target for 2011."

Ng added: "We are also still working on our target for 2012."

Despite this setback, Malaysia will stick to its long-term goal of attracting 36 million visitors by 2020 and tripling its current tourism revenue to RM168 billion (US\$56 billion).

Malaysia's neighbours continued to dominate its arrivals chart, with Singapore (13 million), Indonesia (2.5 million), Thailand (1.5 million) and Bru-

nei (1.1 million) accounting for more than 73 per cent of arrivals for 2010.

They were followed by China (1.1 million), India (690,000) and Australia (590,000). The figures for January 2011 followed an almost identical pattern for the source countries contributing the largest number of tourist arrivals.

With a 17 per cent increase in tourist arrivals in 2010 compared to 2009, India recorded the highest rate of increase among all markets.

Concerted efforts were made in 2011 to introduce products targeted at high-yield tourists. They included helicopter tourism, ecotourism and golf tourism.

Hosting the PGA Tour-accredited CIMB Asia-Pacific Classic at The MINES Resort & Golf Club in Kuala Lumpur for the second consecutive year in October 2011 was seen as a cost-effective way of gaining visibility in the challenging US market.

"We used the opportunity to run 48 slots of 30-second-long television commercials on Malaysia on US golf channels," Ng said.

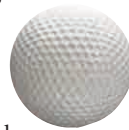
By viewing the tournament on television and seeing the quality of the golf courses and beauty of the country, she believed that American golfers would be motivated to visit Malaysia.

Ecotourism was also seen as a means of increasing arrivals from more marginal markets.

Deputy tourism minister, James Dawos Mamit, said ecotourism could help the country generate revenue.

Markets identified for the promotion of ecotourism tours were Europe, the US and Australia. These countries were expected to generate 50 per cent of the ecotourism market.

Asian Overland Services Travel & Tours managing director, Yap Sook Ling, said that products such as ecotourism appealed to visitors from Europe. — **N. Nithiyananthan**



Tourism target

36

The number in millions of arrivals Malaysia is targeting by 2020



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Cambodia

Traditional markets lead the way

Cambodia is rapidly emerging as a destination for Chinese tourists

In recent years, Cambodia has been reliant on traditional markets from neighbouring countries.

Vietnam remained the kingdom's main source of tourists, with a total of 462,371 visitors through September 2011, according to Ministry of Tourism figures.

ASEAN visitors, comprising 38.7 per cent of the market, still dominate Cambodia's arrivals records. However, tourists from other South-east Asian nations, Eastern Europe and China have started to emerge in the last 12 months, injecting a new lease of life into Cambodia tourism industry.

Visitor numbers from Vietnam rose 21.7 per cent in the first nine months of 2011, comprising 22.2 per cent of total arrivals to Cambodia.

Meanwhile, improved connectivity and the easing of visa



Jungo: looks to Eastern Europe

restrictions had seen a rise in both Laotian and Burmese visitors.

Both source markets recorded significant growth in arrivals. Arrivals from Myanmar soared 57.5 per cent in the first nine months of 2010, while Laotian footfalls totalled 93,263, a 42.8 per cent year-on-year rise in the same period.

However, the border conflict with Thailand appeared to have affected the number of visitors, with figures for the first nine months of 2011 showing a 27.4 per cent decline.

Cambodia's rapid emergence as a top destination for Chinese tourists has continued for a second consecutive year.

The figures showed that in 2010 visitor arrival numbers from China rose 38.5 per cent from 2009, hitting 177,636. In the first nine months of 2011, tourist numbers again increased by about 38 per cent.

Mohan Gunti, advisor to the Cambodia Association of Travel Agents and a member of the government's tourism working group, believed the growth, among other factors, was the result of an increase in trade and travel opportunities.

"The number of Chinese tourists to Cambodia has risen quickly since the establishment of the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area and non-stop flights linking Phnom Penh with Beijing, Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Taipei," he said.

Gunti also attributed the growth to China's burgeoning economy, which was supported by "sustained implementation of the 'opening-up' policy and the government persistent efforts to improve people's living standards".

Traditional markets outside of Asia, such as the US, UK, France and Australia maintained steady growth, albeit less than double digit, with US tourists making up the largest market share.

In the first nine months of this year, the 110,308 US arrivals made up 5.3 per cent of Cambodia's total.

However, tourist numbers from Russia are beginning to soar. Through September this year, the number of Russian visitors to Cambodia rose 117.2 per cent, compared to the same period last year, reaching 44,194.

Although the emergence of Eastern European markets is still relatively minor, Diethelm Travel Cambodia managing director, Pierre Jungo, believes a transition is underway.

Jungo said: "In the past, we have been focused on attracting Western markets, however, Eastern European countries, such as Russia and Ukraine, are now the ones which we have direct interest in."

He expected the rise of these new markets to continue. — Liam Barnes

Chinese numbers up

38

The percentage rise in Chinese arrivals in the first quarter of 2011



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Singapore

China and India take centrestage

Integrated resorts attract growing numbers from ASEAN and beyond

ASEAN has been the biggest source market for Singapore in the past decade. However, owing to an influx of Chinese visitors in the last 12 months, North Asia has become Singapore's fastest-growing source market.



Koh: BTMICE is a top target

In 2000, as outlined by the Singapore Department of Statistics, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Australia and China were the top five markets. Today, figures from the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) show that Indonesia is still the top source market in terms of volume, but China has jumped from fifth to second place, and Japan has slipped from the top five. Malaysia and Australia have retained third and fourth places respectively. India now sits in fifth place.

Numbers from within ASEAN had risen in the last two years, thanks mainly to the destination's two integrated resorts. In the first eight months of 2011, Singapore

had 3.5 million visitors from South-east Asia, a rise of 16.8 per cent over the same period the previous year. The hike between 2009 and 2010 was more marked, with 30.8 per cent more ASEAN visitors. Even in 2009, when tourism markets worldwide

crumbled due to the global financial crisis, arrivals from ASEAN rose by 3.2 per cent over 2008.

China proved to be less resilient. Between 2008 and 2009, during the height of the crisis, visitor numbers from China plummeted by 13.2 per cent while Indian arrivals fell by just 6.8 per cent. The Chinese returned in 2010, lured by Singapore's two integrated resorts. In 2010, STB noted a 25 per cent increase in Chinese visitors over 2009. Meanwhile, Indian arrivals jumped by 14.2 per cent.

Between January and August, the number of Chinese visiting Singapore had risen by 38.8 per

cent, the second highest increase among source markets. Some 1.1 million Chinese visited Singapore in the first eight months of 2011. At the start of the millennium, Singapore attracted less than half a million Chinese visitors. Indian visitor numbers rose by a comparatively muted 5.5 per cent to 582,604.

An STB spokesperson said India and China were priorities.

Randall Tan, regional director of South Asia, Middle East and Africa, STB, said: "As part of the YourSingapore campaign, we are ensuring that we reach first-time Indian visitors as well as seasoned, well-travelled individuals. We are also targeting art enthusiasts. Value creation will be an important consideration in designing tourism products, and discerning Indian travellers who want a deeper, more engaging or a more active experience will appreciate this."

According to Edward Koh, regional director, Greater China, STB, the key target segments are

premium and BTMICE (Business Travel & Meetings, Incentive Travel, Conventions and Exhibitions), first-time leisure travellers and repeat visitors.

Singapore DMC Tour East, whose traditional markets are the UK and Europe, has opened offices in India and China.

"Our offices in China and India basically focus on corporate meetings. We believe that the FIT segment will grow exponentially – the signs are already there," said Judy Lum, senior vice president, sales & marketing, Tour East.

However, Pacific World Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia regional director Manuel Ferrer said that the potential of the Indian and Chinese markets might be exaggerated. "For the MICE business I don't think they will be as important as traditional source markets in the near future. For the leisure business, especially the budget business, these markets are important already," he said. – **Linda Haden**

Chinese numbers up

1.1

The number in millions of Chinese arrivals in the first eight months of 2011



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Travel Trade

Myanmar finds its groove

From a river cruise to a horseride, these tours show Myanmar in a different light, writes **Rahul Khanna**

Cruise with *Dora*

Dora is a newly-launched river cruise that takes passengers down Yangon's waterways and rivers on a carefully-designed route that highlights the destination's fascinating scenery and rich history.

On cruises that last between two and three hours, passengers will see the bustling ports of Yangon, fishing villages on the other side of the river and spectacular views of Botataung and Sule Pagodas.

Spice up the river cruise experience with special tours such as those that explore Yangon Delta Villages, moonlit dinners on the top deck and chartered services to the delta regions of the Ayeyarwaddy Division.

Morning river sightseeing and evening sunset cruises along the Yangon River are also available.

Contact
cruisewithdora@gmail.com

Get to know Shwedagon Pagoda
Exploration Travel has de-



Bagan



Inle Lake



Scott Market in Yangon

veloped a four-hour tour that will cast the renowned Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon in a new light. The tour shows visitors the ins and outs of the spiritual attraction with the help of an English-speaking guide, and includes a traditional Burmese break-

fast, entrance fees, offerings to monks and to the pagoda, a visit to a fortune teller, flower offerings for the day you were born, a souvenir picture and a Burmese lunch.

Highlights of the tour are visits to places around the pagoda that are usually not available to the public or are difficult to find.

Contact
customer.myanmar@khiri.com

Giddy up!

Myanmar Equestrian Federation and Ayeindamar Travels and Tours, the only local company that specialises in horse-riding tours, have introduced the first-ever equestrian tour in Myanmar.

The tour covers destinations such as Hmawbi in Yangon, Bagan, Mandalay, Kalaw, Aung Pan and Pintaya.

It includes tour guides –10 of whom are first-aid trained – horse trainers and extra horses for tourists.

Contact
ayeindamar@myanmar.com.mm

New discoveries in Vietnam

An untouched cave, restoration works and new products promise fresh appeals, reports **Sirima Eamtako**

Explore a virgin cave

Visitors keen on exploring Vietnam's natural landscapes may soon have a new attraction.

A cave with a complex series of grottos has been discovered in the northern mountainous province of Bac Kan. Its first section measures 120m long and is formed by three grottos, while the second is 350m long and formed by five grottos. All stalactites in the cave are untouched, and its walls are covered with blue and white stones.

Local authorities have alerted related agencies to protect and develop the cave into a tourist destination.

Contact
titic@vietnamtourism.gov.vn

with altered interiors are being considered for restoration.

The rest of Hanoi's collection of 1,539 French-style villas have been written off.

Most of these villas today house offices of the government or foreign organisations.

Contact
titic@vietnamtourism.gov.vn

Danang's new terminal

Danang International Airport put its new terminal into service last Christmas, after four years of construction. It is capable of handling up to six million passengers a year.

Contact
titic@vietnamtourism.gov.vn

French villas to be saved

Travellers who are also architecture buffs will be pleased to know that 229 French-style villas in Hanoi's Ba Dinh District, built during the French rule, have been earmarked for preservation by Hanoi's authorities.

Plans to preserve another 432 villas, which are partially ruined, are being drawn, while 644 villas

My Son restoration

The famed My Son Relics Complex, a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site that is home to some 70 temples and towers built between the fourth and 13th centuries, will embark on extensive restoration works from this year until 2016.

Restoration works will be

funded by a US\$6 million grant from the Indian government and executed by Indian experts.

This is part of several activities held under the banner of the India-Vietnam Friendship Year 2012, which commemorates 40 years of bilateral relations.

Contact
titic@vietnamtourism.gov.vn

Ancient citadel tidies up

The 14th century Ho Dynasty Citadel in Vinh Loc District, Thanh Hoa province will receive its official designation as a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site once its US\$1 million resto-

ration is complete by mid-year. Restoration works will include an upgrade to the site's tourism infrastructure.

The citadel, measuring 870cm by 833cm, is also known as Tay Do or Western Capital, to distinguish it from Dong Do, the Eastern Capital or Thang-Long-Hanoi.

Contact
titic@vietnamtourism.gov.vn

Arrive in style

Guests of the five-star Furama Resort Danang are now well taken care of right from the moment they step off the plane,

thanks to the resort-operated VIP lounge at the airport's domestic terminal. It complements a Resort Service Counter at the international terminal and airport transfers to the resort.

Guests can relax and refresh at the VIP lounge before being transferred to the resort, while resort representatives are available round-the-clock to assist guests with luggage.

Refreshments, reading materials on Central Vietnam and Furama Resort Danang, and complimentary Wi-Fi connection are available in the new facility too.

Contact
www.worldhotels.com
www.furamavietnam.com

Danang's newcomer

The 535-room Crowne Plaza Danang, which opened last October, is said to be the largest hotel in Central Vietnam by room count.

It offers meeting facilities and a wide range of dining establishments.

Contact
www.crowneplaza.com/danang



Gathering of great minds

ASEAN tourism officials congregate at ATF to discuss the way forward. Photos by **Patrick Tan**



ASEAN-Japan Centre's Fuchigami Joukei, Japan Tourism Agency's Yoshio Yamamoto and Mission of Japan to ASEAN's Ichitaro Ehara



Brunei Tourism's Zulzalani Osman, Nur Fariza Munyati Haji Abd Aji and Noraini Haji Tersad



China National Tourism Administration's Zhu Ning, Singapore Tourism Board's Lawrence Leong and China National Tourism Administration's Zhang Xinhong



Vietnam National Administration of Tourism's Nguyen Thi Thanh Huong and Dinh Ngoc Duc



Tourism Authority of Thailand's Santi Chudintra and Niti Vongvichasvadi

Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism Laos' Willy Hsieh and Khom Douangchantha, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ASEAN Department Laos' Kingphokeo Phommahaxay, Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism Laos' Souh Manivong, Maniphanh Phommachack, Saly Phimphinit, Ounethouang Khaophanh and Lithisack Vorarath



ASEAN's Eddy Krismeidi, Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy Indonesia's I Gusti Putu Laksaguna, and ASEAN's Somsak Pipoppinyo and Tran Dong Phuong



Tourism Techonology Association Thailand's Apichai Sakulsureeyadej and Tourism Authority of Thailand's Sansern Ngaorungsi



Ministry of Tourism Malaysia's Mohd Fauzee Abd Majid, Rashidi Bin Hasbullah, Christiana Tharsis and Noriman Rojulai



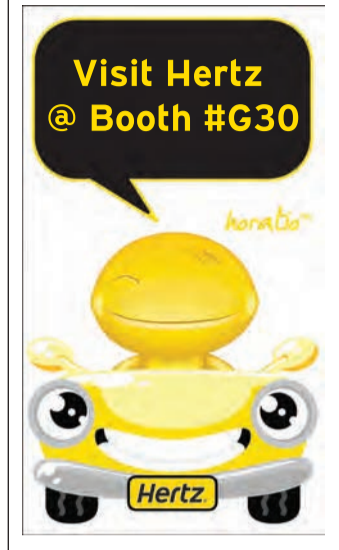
Myanmar Tourism Board's Maung Maung Swe, Ministry of Hotels and Tourism Myanmar's U Htay Aung, Myanmar Tourism Board's Than Shwe and U Khin Maung Yin



Department of Tourism Philippines' Alex Macatuno, Charlie Yu, Daniel Corpuz and Rolando Canizal

Renewal of friendship

Patrick Tan basks in the sea of warm smiles sweeping through days of meetings



Korea Tourism Organization's Dwi Hapsari Mintorahardjo, Singapore Tourism Board's Lawrence Leong and Korea Tourism Organization's Jong Sool Kwon



ASEAN-Japan Centre's Fuchigami Joukei, Ministry of Tourism Cambodia's Tith Chantha and Japan Tourism Agency's Yoshio Yamamoto



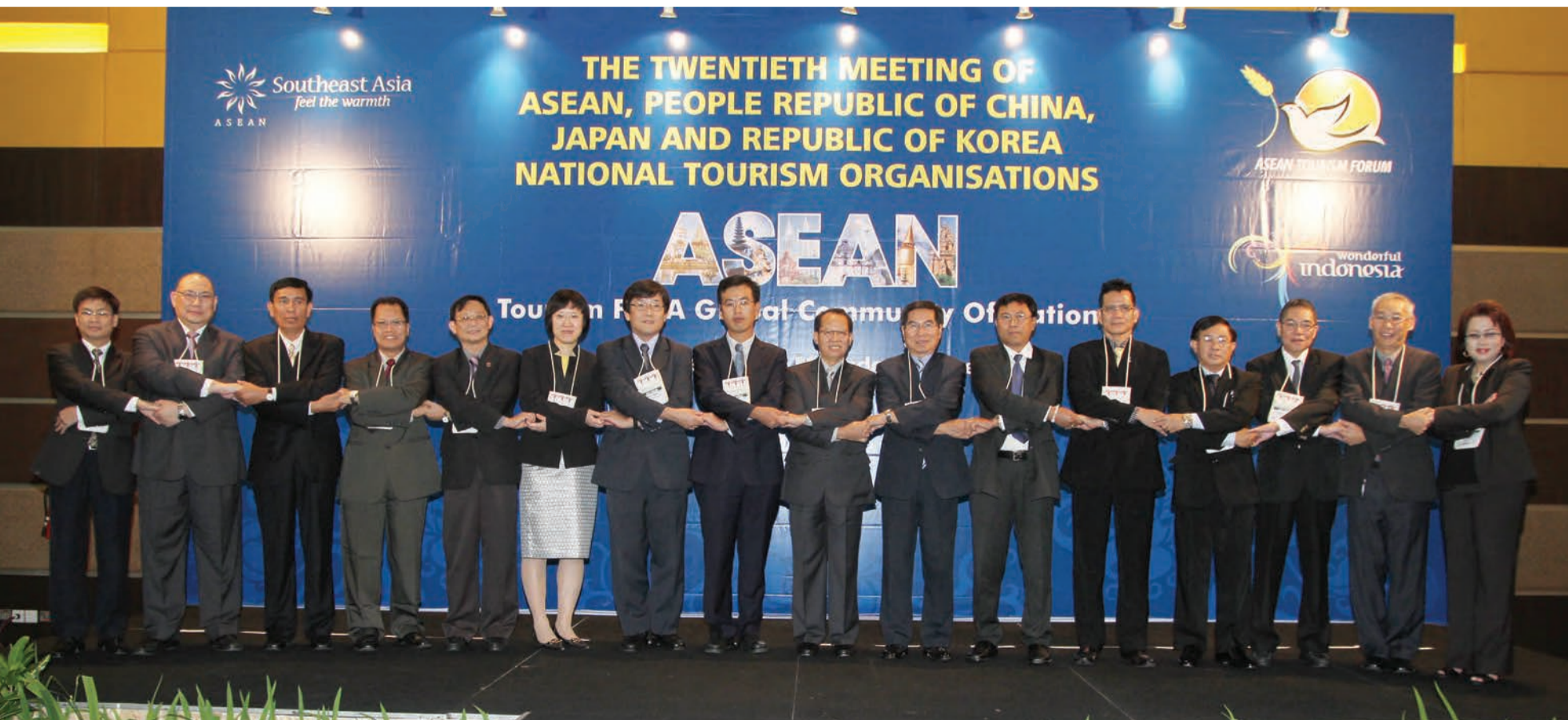
Singapore Tourism Board's Christina Chan, Department of Tourism Philippines' Alex Macatuno, Singapore Tourism Board's Koh Meow Eng and ASEAN's Eddy Krismeidi



Brunei Tourism's Sheikh Jamaluddin Sheikh Mohamed, ASEANTA's Ikhwan Al-Rashid Abdul Rahman, and Brunei Tourism's Md Riza Md Yunos and Zulzalani Osman



Myanmar Tourism Board's Maung Maung Swe, NATAS' Robert Khoo, Lotus Travel Singapore's Allen Tsang, NATAS' Patricia Auyeong, PTAA's Aileen Clemente, NATAS' William Tan, and MATTA's Mohd Khahid Harun, Jenny Shabudin and Phua Tai Neng



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Issue

1

Welcome *to*
The Gems of The Equator
Land of sparkling splendor



Indonesia, an archipelago of wonder...

This is the world's largest archipelago consisting of 17,508 islands scattered across 5120 km of ocean between the Australian and Asian continents. Four-fifths of the area is sea, and the rest constitutes of 30 smaller archipelagos and the five main islands of Sumatra, Java, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Papua.

Long ago, these emerald islands lured traders and missionaries. More recently, it's the tourists and backpackers who come to enjoy the country's spectacular and diverse natural scenes, fascinating cultures and a wide array of exciting activities, from exploring rich marine environments, trekking the jungles and volcanoes, to enjoying sensational spas, vibrant traditions and tantalizing temptations for the taste buds.

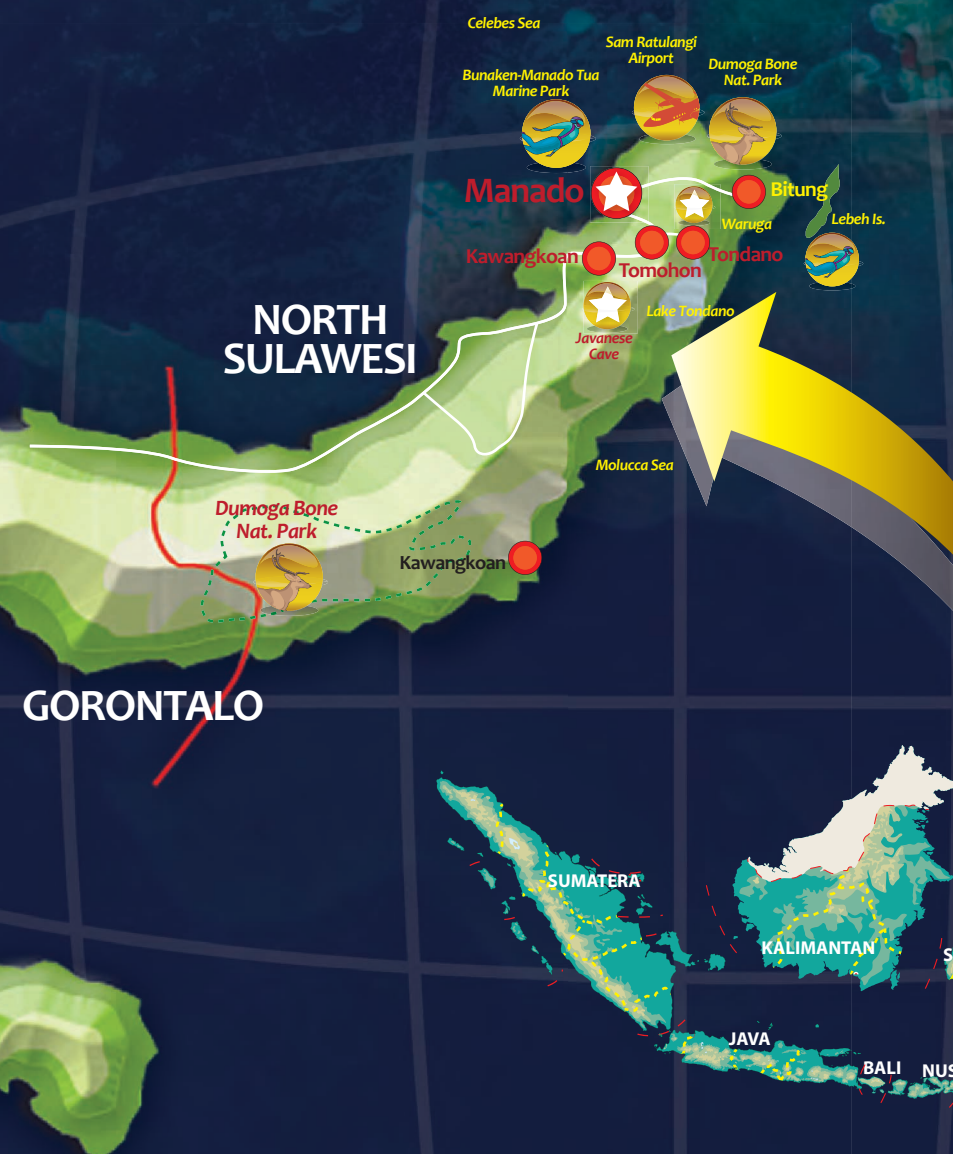
Indonesia's population of more than 210 million comprises 485 ethnic groups who speak 583 different language and dialects, but are united with Bahasa Indonesia, the national language, spoken throughout the archipelago. The largest ethnic group is the Javanese, the Sundanese, and ethnic Malays. "Unity in Diversity" is the nation's motto. It is a symbol of harmonious co-existence of the many cultures unified as one nation.

Discover Magnificent Manado, your venue for the TTG ATF 2012.

Manado is the provincial capital of North Sulawesi overlooking the Bay of Manado. Blessed with a cool climate and stunning scenery, the city is surrounded by several active volcanoes; Mount Lokon, Mount Empung, Mount Klabat and Mount Mahawu. Nearby are the picturesque Lake Tondano and Lake Linow.

As the provincial capital and strategic gateway to the eastern part of the Indonesia, Manado is served by Sam Ratulangi International Airport, Manado is one of the most progressive cities on the island and an ideal meeting, incentives, conventions and exhibitions destination. Modern, international standard hotels and meeting facilities, restaurants and entertainment facilities are continuously being developed.

The city also has its fair share of attractions, such as the Christ Blessing statue which stands at 50 meters (158.3 feet) tall and consists of 20 meters of pedestal and 30 meters of statue. Made of 25 tons of metal fiber and 35 tons of steel, the statue is Asia's 2nd tallest and the world's 4th tallest statue of Christ. Extending 4.2 kilometers, the Boulevard is the longest coastal road in the country and is the largest shopping center in eastern Indonesia with thousands of shops, a number of malls as well as entertainment centers lining the road.



Indonesia Archipelago



Dive in the fabulous seas

Manado's Bunaken National Park with the much photographed extinct volcano, Manado Tua, boasts a mind-boggling array of coral formations and a multitude of marine that makes it the best possible marine adventure to be had, for professional and novice divers alike. Just an hour away, Lembeh Straits host all major reef formations (fringing, barrier, patch and atoll) and is a haven for divers and snorkelers.

Journey into the past

In the village of Airmadidi and Sawangan, an ancient burial site is littered with some 144 pre-Christian rectangular stone tombs called *warugas* in which the dead are buried in an upright position. The oldest sarcophagus reportedly dates back to 900 AD.

Experience gastronomic delights

North Sulawesi's cuisine incorporates the region's rich history and geographic location. Spices and fish are the trademark of its wonderful dishes. Fresh, top quality fish, like tuna are grilled, accompanied by hot, spicy relish (*sambal dabu-dabu*), or made into tangy, fresh soup. The Dutch inspired the Manadonese *klapertaart* (coconut pudding) and *ontbijtkoek* (spiced flavor tea bread). One of its most famous exports is Bubur Manado or *Bubur Tinotuan*, a rice porridge filled with chunks of pumpkin, corn kernels, and leafy greens and served with hot sambal condiment, and salted fish.

Follow natural trails

Ecotourism is the biggest attraction in Manado. Indigenous, rare plants and animals are protected in nature reserves. Located some 60 kilometers from Manado, Tangkoko Duasaudara Nature Reserve protects among others the Maleo bird, anoa, pig deer, and the Celebes black macaque (*Macaca nigra*), the reserve is dominated by the volcanoes, Mount Duasudara (1,351 meters), Mount Tangkoko (1,109 meters) and the 450 meters active volcanic cone, Gunung Batu Angus. Some 50 kilometers from the city is Tandurusa Wildlife Park, home of the world's smallest primates, the tarsier (*Tarsius tarsier*).



Waruga



Maengket Dance



Klapertaart



Lake Linau



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