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MakeMyTrip's offline coup

Singaporean buy is part of regional plan

By Gracia Chiang
SINGAPORE Having acquired a majority share in Singapore's Luxury Tours & Travel earlier this month, Indian online travel agent (OTA) MakeMyTrip is also looking to similarly expand in Malaysia and Thailand to move a step closer to suppliers in the region.

On May 9, MakeMyTrip picked up a 79 per cent stake in the 26-year-old travel agency, which provides a range of services from hotel reservations to seat-in coach tours (*TTG Asia e-Daily*, May 19, 2011). It will remain independently run.

Speaking to *TTG Asia* on the sidelines of EyeforTravel's Travel Distribution Summit Asia 2011 last week, senior vice president – international markets, Amit Saberwal, who recently moved to Singapore to oversee the OTA's South-east Asia growth, said: "A lot of people continue to come to Singapore and the region for

group tours. (Luxury) has been our associate for a number of years, so it makes logical sense for us to close the last mile.

"(The investment) gives us a base for us to work out from and gets us closer to our suppliers. We then no longer remain an unknown entity in the region."

Among MakeMyTrip's top three outbound markets, Thailand takes about a 45 per cent share of the travellers; Malaysia, 35 per cent; and Singapore, 20 per cent.

Saberwal said all three countries were equally important, but Singapore was "more intense from an operational perspective" because of its limited supply.

MakeMyTrip's expansion into this region will be lodging-led, explained Saberwal. "We already tap various sources for inventory and we will develop more direct contacts as we go along," he said.

Continued on page 2

The tourism veteran tells **Karen Yue** that she wants to chart new growth in the company's ferry and cruise business and export its know-how to the region – see page 6

Full steam ahead



TTG Asia e-Daily

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In the Maldives, high prices raise eyebrows

Hotels and tour operators worry about rising business costs and their impact on tourism

By Feizal Samath

COLOMBO Escalating taxes are putting a damper on the Maldives' allure, with the impact not hitting home yet but expected to be felt keenly in the coming months.

Having introduced a new 3.5 per cent tourism goods and services tax (TGST) in January, to the chagrin of international tour operators who complained of the short notice given, President Mohamed Nasheed announced last Friday that the tax may be further increased to six per cent.

Although no time frame was mentioned, UK-based operators said they had been advised by hotels in Maldives to expect a hike by next January.

Chic Locations UK director David Kevan said the general



Kevan: growth stymied by cost

concern was that the destination was beginning to outprice itself, to the advantage of rivals such as Mauritius and Sri Lanka.

"Most operators have been concerned by the Maldives' pricing even before the latest round of tax increases.

"I don't think you will find too many UK operators looking at growth for the destination over the next couple of years. In fact, I think most would be more than happy to see a single-digit increase in bookings," he said.

UK, once the biggest visitor-generating market for the island,

was overtaken by China last year. Germany is in third place.

Osman Gani, senior executive, Shades of Maldives, said the Chinese market was a "very sensitive" one. "After the GST on tourism was enforced, there was a slight drop in Chinese bookings. If the government introduces more taxes, it will definitely make it worse for Chinese guests as their budgets are limited," he said.

Malin Hapugoda, managing director of Aitken Spence, which owns and manages six luxury resorts in the Maldives, said the TGST was being passed to operators and there was currently no drop in demand.

A groundhandler for the German market who declined to be named also said the TGST had no significant impact on volume

yet, but it was "difficult to say what would happen next year".

Tourism-related businesses in Maldives are facing a raft of new taxes as the government grapples to raise revenue in order to combat a budget deficit.

Among the measures are a business profit tax of 15 per cent starting in July and a proposed 10 per cent tax on dividend income. Adding to the costs is also a fairly new retirement scheme, which requires both the employee and employer to contribute seven per cent of the former's pensionable wage every month.

Said Kevan: "At Chic, we operate at the top end. But even our clients are saying they know they can afford the Maldives, but much less sure they can afford to enjoy it."

Continued from page 1

Next phase: overseas

While it is already working with all the major hotel chains, MakeMyTrip also plans to build relationships with the smaller or independent hotels, said Saberwal.

"Our Asia strategy is still fluid. The priority is to look for teams (like Luxury) first because we truly believe that good, smart local teams know the region and business better than us. But if we don't come across a lot of interesting teams, we might decide to do it alone as MakeMyTrip.com," he said.



Saberwal: good partners needed

With more than 90 per cent of its consumers still coming from India, these teams would also be required to grow the outbound market from their respective countries.

Said Saberwal: "We are an ambitious company, so we don't rule out any possibilities of expansion in this region. The immediate goal is to work for Indian customers, but also look at going after the foreign consumer base in the medium term."

He added that the other markets of interest to the OTA were Dubai, Hong Kong and Sri Lanka.

According to latest financial results released earlier this month by the publicly-listed company, its revenue rose 49.3 per cent year-on-year to US\$124.7 million for its fiscal year ending March 31, 2011.

During that time, gross bookings for air ticketing and hotels and packages registered a combined year-on-year growth of 59.4 per cent, while number of transactions for air ticketing and hotels and packages increased 59.9 per cent year-on-year.

Indonesian trade to get promotional boost

By Mimi Hudoyo

JAKARTA Indonesia is undergoing a restructuring in its tourism sector, which will see promotion boards and associations being set up at both the national and regional levels.

Ministry of Culture and Tourism director general of tourism marketing Sapta Nirwandar said: "The law stipulates two new bodies. One is GIPI, whose role is similar to a chamber of commerce, and the other is the tourism promotion board."

The country's Indonesia Tourism Promotion Board became inactive since the early 2000s due to a change in management.

The legislation is expected to foster better private-public coop-

eration, while ensuring that such a partnership will remain even if there is a change in government.

GIPI, or the Indonesian Tourism Industries Association, is intended to become the government's think tank for tourism development. The board, on the other hand, will coordinate sales-related promotion programmes, which are currently executed separately by the government and trade. It will be run by professionals with funding support from the government.

At the national level, GIPI is already formed, while the tourism promotion board is awaiting the president's approval on the list of board members. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism, for

their part, will focus on brand marketing.

Across Indonesia, several regional boards are already up and running, although none have received public funding so far. *TTG Asia* understands that regional governments are first waiting to see the financing model that the national tourism promotion board will adopt.

"With the new board set up and funded by the government, we expect it will enable us to move forward faster and more effectively in developing regional tourism because the board has stronger legal status," said Andhy Irawan, chairman of Central Java Promo, which is in the process of becoming Central

Java Tourism Promotion Board.

In Bali, however, the Bali Tourism Board has been transformed into GIPI Bali (*TTG Asia e-Daily*, May 13, 2011), with the new promotion board to be established later.

GIPI Bali elected chairman I Gusti Ngurah Wijaya said the more pressing need on the island was to have a "pressure group" that could lobby the government in policy making, as Bali was already selling itself.

"GIPI will give the private sector associations a better position to voice our concerns and to tackle issues such as unlicensed villa operations, excessive hotel development in certain areas and traffic congestion," he said.

The future of travel search

Google says it will make trip purchases more convenient, but not compete with suppliers for bookings

By Karen Yue
SINGAPORE Travel searches on search engine giant Google will soon deliver more comprehensive results, following its successful acquisition last month of US-based ITA Software, which specialises in organising airline data.

Speaking to *TTG Asia* on the sidelines of the recent Eye-forTravel’s Travel Distribution Summit Asia 2011, Ali Yilmaz, Google’s head of travel, APAC, said the company was developing a more advanced product that will generate better results for consumers who search for travel products online.

A Youtube video demonstration titled *Google’s Acquisition of ITA Software* showed how future searches would not just generate links to travel websites, but display flight details, ticket prices on preferred travel dates and links to suppliers, making it easier for the consumer to quickly view options at a glance.

Eventually, such searches would also be possible for hotel



A current search on Google delivers generic links to travel products (left), but the company is working towards an improved version that can display flight details, exact prices on travel dates and links to suppliers, making it easier for consumers to compare real-time rates (right)

“I have to be very clear. Google does not have an intention of selling anything – not airline tickets, not hotel rooms.

products, said Ali. However, no definite timeline has been set for the completion of the product. “We are already making advances like that through Google Maps. In countries where there is a local domain, like in Singapore,

consumers can now see room rates of hotels searched through Google Maps. The future product will also generate real-time hotel details drawn from advertisers or travel suppliers,” he said. Aside from offering consum-



ers breakthroughs in flight and hotel search, the added capability is supposed to deliver greater traffic to travel websites. Ali explained that while search results would only reflect room rates of hotels that advertise with Google, links to non-advertisers would still be provided. He also reiterated that Google was not becoming a travel retailer. “I have to be clear. Google does not have an intention of selling anything – not airline tickets, not hotel rooms. We just want to

show (search) results the best we can and you (the consumer) can go to the online travel agent site to make the purchase,” he said. Ali added that the acquisition would not affect ITA Software’s existing customers, which include travel search providers and sites such as Microsoft’s Bing, Orbitz and Kayak. “Google has guaranteed the US Department of Justice that it will respect the agreements with ITA Software’s customers like Bing till 2016,” he said.

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Adam Tan



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Poll

We want to hear from you. Choose from a list of four topics and vote on www.ttgasia.com to help shape the inaugural TTG Travel Agent Conference at ITB Asia this October. Remember, your vote counts.

Hot Deals

Galaxy Macau Resort is offering introductory room bundles, and Regent Hotels & Resorts launches art and culture packages for its properties in Beijing and Taipei.



Hot Moves

Marcus Reinders is appointed managing director of Starwood Resorts Maldives, and Accor Asia Pacific appoints Veerant Limprasutr as executive general manager of Mercure Patong Phuket and Mercure Krabi Deevana.

Mekong region must-dos



Willem Niemeijer, group CEO & founder of Bangkok-based Khiri Travel, contributed this

opinion ahead of the two-day Mekong Tourism Forum, which opens on May 27 in Laos

HERE are the top 10 issues that need to be addressed in order to promote sustainable growth in tourism across the Greater Mekong Subregion, as identified by Khiri Travel's country managers in Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam:

1. Political stability in Thailand and an end to the Thai-Khmer border conflict. Because Indochina destinations depend so heavily on Thailand as a gateway, airport closures and protests in Bangkok adversely impact the whole region. When Thailand is stable and working, the whole Greater Mekong region benefits. Let's hope for stability before and after Thailand's general election on July 3.

2. Easier visa arrangements. Getting multiple visas is a big hassle. Automatic 30-day visas on arrival would drive growth immensely. Thailand figured this

out a long time ago. If we must have visas, one visa for the whole ASEAN region would be a viable second option. Currently, multi-destination holidays need multiple visas. With no visas, or one "ASEAN Schengen" visa, demand for multi-destination travel would increase notably.

3. Better airport management at Suvarnabhumi Airport. With a population of 10 million and a strategic geographic location, Bangkok's role as an aviation hub should be untouchable. However, arriving aircraft are often not assigned gates. Passengers have to climb onto buses and use stairs. Long immigration queues and assorted scams at Suvarnabhumi also need to be addressed.

4. An end to aviation protectionism. This is particularly noticeable in Koh Samui and Siem Reap, where Bangkok Airways has excessive marketshare. In these destinations, competition is marginalised, creating, in effect, a cartel that keeps ticket prices high and tourism growth slow.

5. Greater respect for green issues in rural areas. Don't build shoulder-to-shoulder hotels on every beach in Thailand. Respect national park status.

The Mekong River region is under severe threat. Natural pri-

mary forests are being earmarked for rubber tree plantations.

Conversely, nature conservation is a boon for tourism. It would safeguard the Mekong region's rich biodiversity and help prevent disasters like mudslides and flooding due to logging and encroachment on watersheds.

6. Greater respect for green issues in urban areas. Cities such as Bangkok and Ho Chi Minh City would be wonderful with dedicated pedestrian zones, reduced noise and particle pollution from vehicles. It's not just tourism that would benefit, but the population.

7. Better infrastructure. Urban tourism based on short breaks for shopping, dining, nightlife and heritage is growing rapidly. Bangkok made a quantum leap as a destination with the opening of its BTS skytrain and MRT underground trains.

Well thought-out infrastructure enhances the tourism experience, as well as the quality of life of residents. Build it and they will come. But no white elephants please – such as the BRT bus system in Bangkok.

8. Bold branding. Destination campaigns need to be refreshed. Sadly – and depending on who you ask – Amazing Thailand is

now associated with amazing political problems, as much as amazing beaches, food or service. In desperation, Vietnam has also opened the creation of its national identity slogan to a public contest.

The whole process needs to be thought through carefully. A successful brand, such as South Africa's It's Possible or Egypt's Where It All Begins, needs to capture the imagination of a wide range of people, not just tourists.

9. Much less red tape. Try investing in a hotel or tour operation in Indochina and you'll soon be embroiled in an intractable Gordian knot of business regulations, government approvals, licensing contradictions, kickbacks and delays. If national development through tourism is the goal, cut the tape, simplify and make it transparent.

10. More trust. The governments of the Greater Mekong region need to start thinking regionally and not nationally. A commitment to regional tourism objectives will attract tourists and create wealth faster than any national agenda.

The whole of ASEAN is heading towards a large degree of integration in 2015. It would be wonderful if the Greater Mekong region got there first.

Most commented on www.ttgasia.com

Kudos to Hyderabad CVB CEO hire

THE LAUNCH of India's inaugural state-level CVB in Hyderabad generated much interest among our readers. A few of them were happy to note that Jalil Khan, a California-based 23-year veteran of United Airlines, was returning to take charge of driving the MICE industry in his native Hyderabad as CEO of the new bureau.

Chennai-based Narayanan Sankar Ram said he was glad that a Hyderabad born-and-bred youngster was keen on promoting and showcasing the MICE offerings in his native city. "It is a very good sign of gratitude," he explained.

UAE-based Aravinda Babu also saw the appointment of Khan as a positive move by the state government. "Happy to note that the government has appointed a highly-experienced and able person like Jalil Khan as CEO," he said. "I wish Mr Khan and his team all the best and success in 'bringing the world to Hyderabad'. Keep up the good work Mr Khan!"

Indonesia's mature spa offerings

IN our story on spa businesses expanding in China and Southeast Asia, Mandara Spa president and COO Jeff Matthews said a mature spa destination like Indonesia was more focused on exporting expertise. Jakarta-based Nugroho Setiatmadji said: "It is very interesting to find out that Indonesia is a mature destination for those seeking spas. Really appreciate such recognition."

Shaza's Asian expansion draws support

THE FIVE-star hotel chain's plans to extend its luxury shariah-compliant concept to Asia has gotten the nod from Indonesia's Yuslan Yusoff, managing director/senior vice president operations of Jayakarta Hotels & Resorts. "I had the same idea to operate in Shanghai five years ago. What can I do to help this group and support the growth of halal concepts in Malaysia and Indonesia?" he asked.



EDITORIAL

Raini Hamdi
Group Editor (raini.hamdi@ttgasia.com)

Gracia Chiang
Editor, TTG Asia (gracia.chiang@ttgasia.com)

Karen Yue
Editor, TTGmice (karen.yue@ttgasia.com)

Brian Higgs
Assistant Editor, TTG Asia Online (brian.higgs@ttgasia.com)

Ameé Enriquez
Senior Sub-editor (amee.enriquez@ttgasia.com)

Sirima Eamtako
Editor, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar and Laos (sirima.eamtako@ttgasia.com)

Mimi Hudoyo
Editor, Indonesia (mdmfasia@cbn.net.id)

Catherine Monthienvichienchai
Editor, Special Projects (catherine.monthien@gmail.com)

Sim Kok Chwee
Correspondent-at-large (aviasian.images@gmail.com)

Ellen Chen
Correspondent, Malaysia (ellenchen07@gmail.com)

Marianne Carandang
Correspondent, The Philippines (marcarandang@gmail.com)

Prudence Lui
Correspondent, Hong Kong (prului@yahoo.com)

Amy Fabris-Shi
Correspondent, China (amy@scribesoftheorient.com)

Anand and Madhura Katti
Correspondent, Mumbai, India (anmkatti@mtnl.net.in)

Sharmila Chand
Correspondent, New Delhi, India (chand.sharmila@gmail.com)

Feizal Samath
Correspondent, Sri Lanka (feizalsam@gmail.com)

Vivian Lee
Correspondent, South Korea (wei_wei_cheng@hotmail.com)

Faith Chang
Correspondent, Australia (faithchang26@yahoo.com)

Redmond Sia, Haze Loh
Creative Designers

Lina Tan
Editorial Assistant

SALES & MARKETING

Michael Chow
Publisher (michael.chow@ttgasia.com)

Katherine Ng, Marisa Chen
Senior Business Managers (katherine.ng@ttgasia.com, marisa.chen@hk.china.com)

Jonathan Yap
Business Manager (jonathan.yap@ttgasia.com)

Cheryl Tan
Corporate Marketing Manager (cheryl.tan@ttgasia.com)

Carol Cheng
Assistant Manager Administration and Marketing (carol.cheng@hk.china.com)

Betty Loo
Advertisement Administration Executive (betty.loo@ttgasia.com)

PUBLISHING SERVICES

Tony Yeo
Division Manager (tony.yeo@ttgasia.com)

Agnes Loy
Senior Production Executive (agnes.loy@ttgasia.com)

Nancy Lee
Production Co-ordinator (nancy.lee@ttgasia.com)

Carol Wong
Circulation Executive (carol.wong@ttgasia.com)

TTG ASIA MEDIA

Darren Ng
Managing Director (darren.ng@ttgasia.com)

OFFICES

SINGAPORE 1 Science Park Road
#04-07 The Capricorn, Singapore Science Park II
Singapore 117528
Tel: (65) 6395-7575 Fax: (65) 6536-2972
contact@ttgasia.com; www.ttgasia.com

HONG KONG 11/F ING Tower
308-320 Des Voeux Road, Central, Hong Kong
Tel: (852) 2571-9333 Fax: (852) 2806-0646



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BEST WESTERN Dalat Plaza Hotel

The 91-room BEST WESTERN Dalat Plaza Hotel enjoys a beautiful location in the heart of Dalat city. Ideal for corporate and leisure travelers, the hotel is designed to suit every need, whether it be a vacation with friends and families or a business meeting and conference. Well-appointed guestrooms combined with a range of friendly, yet professional, services including concierge, room service and a local shuttle are offered to all guests.

BEST WESTERN Hotel Kyoto

BEST WESTERN Hotel Kyoto is Best Western's 15th hotel in Japan and its first in Kyoto. The hotel enjoys a great location next to the fashion centre of Shinkyogoku and the Gion nightlife, entertainment and shopping area. The hotel was designed around the uniquely Japanese concept of 'Nagomu'. Its architecture and interior combines modern facilities with Japanese décor to offer guests a truly relaxing stay. The 84 comfortable guestrooms are well appointed quality facilities and amenities.

BEST WESTERN Mangga Dua Hotel and Residence

Best Western International is welcoming guests to its newest hotel in Indonesia – BEST WESTERN Mangga Dua Hotel and Residence. The hotel is ideally located in a fantastic central city location in the country's capital Jakarta. The property is offering 148 rooms and 20 suites with comfortable and inviting atmosphere. Designed as an ideal accommodation choice for both leisure and business travelers.



VIEW FROM THE TOP

MAY 27 – JUNE 2, 2011 • TTG ASIA 6

Christina Siaw | The tourism veteran tells **Karen Yue** that she wants to chart new growth in the company's ferry and cruise business and export its know-how to the region
CEO
Singapore Cruise Centre

Full steam ahead

What was your life like before joining the Singapore Cruise Centre (SCC) in January?

I moved from Singapore to Hong Kong to work for Cathay Pacific for seven to eight years before returning in 2004 to take on the role of general manager of Zuji Singapore. Soon, I was asked to oversee Taiwan as well. While spending time there, I was headhunted to start Macau.com, an inbound tourism portal. I went over for three-and-a-half years, but I wanted to come back to Singapore, which was transforming into a vibrant city. When I came back, a headhunter – I love headhunters – told me about an opportunity with SCC. I thought, well, I started my career with an airline, so why not try the sea!

How will you draw on your previous experience to lead SCC?

Our ferry business is not that different from that of the low-cost carriers (LCCs). If you look at how the LCCs are maximising everything that they have and how the airports are helping them to do that, you will realise that SCC plays the same role. I've mapped the ferry business model to that of the LCCs', facilitating more services during the peak hours at a lower per unit cost and building an ecosystem that allows ferry service operators to have their supplies and ancillary facilities at affordable prices. An example of how SCC accomplishes this is our construction of fuel tanks at Tanah Merah ferry terminal. Ferries can refuel there, which saves them time and money, instead of burning more fuel to get to the refuelling station.

What are your other plans?

The Harbourfront has a 24-hour custom and immigration facility, and I would like to increase ferry services between here and the Riau Islands. I want to expand our services at the Tanah Merah ferry terminal to handle all kinds of watercraft and extend ferry services to 23.00 or midnight. Although passenger numbers for gaming ships have fallen, the number of passengers from the Riau Islands has more or less mitigated that fall, simply because Singapore is becoming a very attractive destination. Visitors from Bintan and Batam want to maximise their time here, by coming in early and leaving late.

We will be spending S\$13 million (US\$10.5 million) to S\$14 million on rejuvenating the Har-

bourfront terminal, due to be completed next March or April. This will give the terminal 25 to 30 per cent more space. We are also changing the identity of the terminal to give it a more holiday feel, our retail mix, and the look and feel of our advertising.

You make the ferry business sound important.

It is. Last year, passenger throughput by ferry was approximately 5.2 million, while cruise throughput was a million. There are about 1.6 to 1.7 million people in the Riau Islands, and at the rate they are prospering, there will be more traffic from that region. We facilitate efficient and cost-effective transportation between the Riau Islands and Singapore. We want to be the receiving terminals for all kinds of watercraft, from the normal ferries to the limousine ferries (the new generation of ferries that ply Singapore and Bintan) and the superyachts. And there will be more superyachts between

new terminal will double our capacity. But whether or not SCC wins (the tender), we will continue to work closely with the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) in increasing the pipeline of cruises coming into Singapore.

Does SCC plan to manage any cruise or ferry terminals overseas?

We are looking for the right opportunity. Having said that, we must emphasise that our key objective is aligned to that of STB, which is to build Singapore into a cruise hub. The way we do this is to contribute to making the surrounding areas of Singapore a cruise playground. We go to interesting and smaller ports in Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia, and help them develop their operations to a standard that international cruise lines can accept.

How does SCC help its neighbours?

Our expertise is in mobile terminal operations. We have a brick-and-mortar facility at Harbourfront but ships some-

“Our key objective is to build Singapore into a cruise hub. We do this by making our surroundings a cruise playground.”

Singapore and Batam in the future because of the Montigo Bay project (Montigo Resorts Nongsa is an upscale resort by KOP Hotels and Resorts, which will open this November). The developers have been talking to us about having their crafts sail from Tanah Merah ferry terminal to Montigo Bay.

Will other facilities be improved?

We are looking at it. Tanah Merah ferry terminal had a facelift some years ago. Business has been increasing and we are working with the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore to plan an increase in capacity.

What about the new International Cruise Terminal? Will SCC bid for the operator tender?

Definitely. It is going to be an iconic facility. Business-wise, the

times dock at the container ports at Jurong and Pasir Panjang because of their size or when Harbourfront is too busy. We house the customs, immigration and all the necessary terminal processes in tents. We also create space for the shore excursion people to come and pick up passengers. There are quite a few South-east Asian ports without brick-and-mortar terminals and we would like to bring this expertise to them. The capital involved in mobile terminal operations is very low, yet the standard



Case study

How *dabbawallas* became Tourism Queensland’s campaign partners



WHAT Tourism Queensland (TQ) used Mumbai’s iconic *dabbawallas* for its Million Dollar Memo campaign, launched in March, to deliver invites to 100,000 office-goers. They were asked to send in a video showing what makes their company a great workplace and why they think Queensland is the ultimate incentive destination. TQ also worked with Thomas Cook India to print a nine-day Gold Coast, Cairns and Sydney package on the back of memos. Twenty finalists will be asked to participate in a challenge event in August, and the winner will walk away with A\$1 million (US\$1 million) worth of travel experiences in Queensland.

WHO A *dabbawalla* – literally a person with a lunch box – is a delivery man unique to India. Lunch boxes (*dabbas*) of freshly-cooked food are collected by bicycle, either from a worker’s home or designated restaurants. They are then placed inside uniform aluminium boxes marked with a distinguishing colour or symbol. The boxes are sorted at a designated area, grouped according to destination and placed on luggage coaches on trains, with the markings signifying where they are to be offloaded. Empty boxes are then collected after lunch and sent back in a similar manner.

WHY Anthony Hayes, CEO, TQ, said: “Our representatives in India understood the importance and reach of *dabbas* and decided to use it as a vehicle to get across the message of the campaign to organisations and corporates.”

TQ marketing manager, India, Ryna Sequeira, said: “*Dabbawallas* are an ideal example

of teamwork demonstrated in an organisation. Hence, we used their services as part of the campaign to deliver large-sized Million Dollar Memos to corporates in Mumbai City.”

The service model of Mumbai’s more than 5,000 *dabbawallas*, who deliver lunch boxes even during severe weather conditions, has been used as a case study by many multinational companies. According to a survey, they make less than one mistake in every six million deliveries despite the fact that most of the delivery staff are illiterate.

This activity has become an attraction in itself, and many tourists come and wait at train stations to watch *dabbawallas* go about their work.

TARGET Sequeira said: “Our target was to deliver 100,000 memos to different individuals and we achieved it within a day. It was more of an interest-generating and publicity exercise for Tourism Queensland.” – **Anand & Madhura Katti**

Retailfront

A mixed review of Lokopoko, a newcomer to Singapore



The store’s basement location makes it slightly hard to find. The crowds, however, should start to come in once more people are aware of this underpass.

SUGGESTIONS While the store’s physical front was eye-catching, stepping inside was a bit of a let-down. It was also slightly disturbing that when I was enquiring with one of the staff, the other was snacking on sweets in front of me.

With four workstations, I also wondered why there were only two people on duty during what should be the peak period, when the office crowd gets off work. This made the store look empty.

The counter also seemed a bit too cluttered, especially for a fairly new store. Unnecessary items could be hidden from sight. – **Gracia Chiang**

PRESENCE Lokopoko is located in a newly created underground mall link between Raffles City Shopping Centre and the Esplanade MRT station. Decked out in vibrant colours, the shop projects a young and fun vibe. With a name like Lokopoko, however, one would not be able to guess that this was a travel agency, if not for the travel posters displayed on its floor-to-ceiling glass windows.

APPEARANCE The two staff members, who were casually dressed, greeted me in a luke-warm manner from behind the counter. That aside, I liked their luggage-shaped name cards. Their job titles – travel guardian – also made me smile.

EASE While there was no waiting area, the seven stools in front of the long service counter provided ample space. Two files with information on packages were on stands outside the store, offering customers a chance to browse before coming in.



— Advertorial —

KICK OFF 2011 WITH NEW PARTIAL HOSTED BUYERS’ CATEGORY & EXHIBITOR BOOTH DESIGN COMPETITION

Riding on the back of a successful show last October, Messe Berlin, the organisers of ITB Asia, the leading trade show for the Asian travel market, announced new initiatives for this year’s event taking place from **19–21 October at Suntec Singapore**.

ITB Asia introduces a partial hosted buyers’ category

Known for attracting top quality buyers and its effectiveness in generating genuine business leads, the programme broke records in **2010** by hosting **580** top-quality buyers from over **40** countries and produced an enviable result where over 80% secured contracts with exhibitors at the show.

The new category will help cope with the increased demand and provide buyers with tight travelling schedules a more flexible option as well. Partial hosted buyers can choose to attend any two days of the show and fulfil a total of 15 appointments, as compared to the three-day attendance and 30 appointments requirements for fully hosted buyers.

“The partial hosted buyer category is conceptualised based on feedback from buyers who are unable to commit to the full programme but yet do not want to miss out on this excellent platform for doing business at ITB Asia 2011. They requested for more flexibility to participate in panel discussions and conferences such as Associations Day. With this, over 600 top quality buyers representing the MICE, leisure and corporate travel markets will be invited this year,” said Nino Gruettke, Executive Director of ITB Asia.

Partial-hosted buyers will enjoy similar benefits as fully hosted buyers, excluding airfares. These include premium accommodation, invites to networking events, complimentary access to the Web-In-Travel conference and admission to ITB Berlin 2012.

Apply now: itb-asia.com/buyers



ITB Asia

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ITB Asia introduces ‘Best Booth Design’ award

This year, the organisers are introducing a ‘Best Booth Design’ award to express appreciation for the **creativity** and **effort** that goes behind these amazing booth designs. The award will kick off with two categories – Individual and Octanorm and winners will be selected based on a combination of visitor votes by journalists, buyers and other exhibitors. The results will be announced on the second day of the show and winners of each category will receive an award plaque and the winning booths will be featured in the official ITB Asia show daily published by TTG Asia.

“ITB Asia is an important event for many of our exhibitors looking to raise their regional profile and meet with key trade partners. Therefore, many of them dedicate significant resources and effort in designing and decorating their booths and we’ve seen some fantastic examples in past shows,” said Gruettke.

Currently in its fourth year, the show attracted **6,605** attendees and **720** exhibitors from over **60** countries in 2010. This year, the show is set to grow further due to an influx of new exhibitors, accounting for 23.4% of the exhibitors signed up to date. First time exhibitor Hilton Worldwide has also become ITB Asia’s first ever ‘Official Partner Hotel 2011’.



Improved access buoys ecotourism

Courtesy of Brunei Tourism

A targeted campaign

Sultanate focusing on key markets and new products to sustain growth. By **S Puvaneswary**

Arrivals

Brunei Tourism is targeting a 20 per cent increase in air arrivals this year over 2010's target of 200,000 foreign visitors. In 2009, the sultanate received 157,474 air arrivals.

Air arrivals from January to July 2010 (latest statistics available) saw 111,538 foreign tourists to Brunei. The top five markets were Malaysia, China, the UK, Singapore and Australia.

NTO

In February, Brunei Tourism appointed marketing and PR representatives for its two key markets. Beijing Longway International Travel Service, was appointed for China/Hong Kong, while The Walshe Group oversees Australia/New Zealand.

Brunei Tourism has also hired consultancy firm Accenture to assess the potential impact of tourism on the economy and employment. Results from the study, expected to be out in June, will help the NTO in coming up with a master plan for tourism and human capital development.

Brunei Tourism will also use more social media as part of its online marketing efforts. "With more travellers going online, we need means to interact with

them," said its director of marketing and promotion, Jean Christophe Robles Espinosa.

Hotels

Most hotels have maintained contract rates for 2011. Hotels in Brunei also do not have peak season surcharges, and published rates are mostly consistent throughout the year.

The 112-room Times Hotel Brunei, which soft-opened last October, is the newest addition. According to hotel duty manager Razami Safar, its location – less than five minutes from the Brunei International Airport and above the Times Square Shopping Centre – attracts transit guests and business travellers.

Existing properties are also getting makeovers. The only international hotel brand in Brunei, Radisson Hotel Brunei Darussalam (see Checking In on page 11) will be refurbished in stages, starting in the second half of 2011. This is expected to take up to 18 months. The 11-year-old, 518-room Empire Hotel & Country Club is also undergoing its first refurbishment. It will be spending B\$8 million (US\$6.4 million) to upgrade 197 guest-rooms in stages, scheduled to be completed by year-end.



"We have very good forests, with a diversity of flora and fauna. There is also no need to go very deep into the forests or very far from the city to spot wildlife. This is our unique selling point to attract nature tourists."

Mohd Daud Abdullah

Managing director
Mona Florafauna Tours Enterprise

Meanwhile, Brunei Hotel in Bandar Seri Begawan reopened in February after a year of major renovations.

Airlines

Royal Brunei Airlines (RBA) began four weekly flights to Melbourne in March. RBA now flies 14 times weekly to three Australian cities, the others being Brisbane and Perth.

Outbound agent from Malaysia, Jason Lim, managing director of Golden Tourworld Travel, said this increased regional capacity to Melbourne would also provide an added option for travellers trying to find a seat on flights from Kuala Lumpur/Singapore to Melbourne – part of the Kangaroo route – especially during the year-end holiday season.

Low-cost carriers are also opening up the destination. Air access to Brunei improved further when Cebu Pacific Air launched the Manila-Brunei route last August, operating twice-weekly return services from Manila to Bandar Seri Begawan. This is in addition to RBA's daily flights to Manila. In the same month, AirAsia also increased frequencies, from daily to twice-daily return flights from Kuala Lumpur to Bandar Seri Begawan.

Products

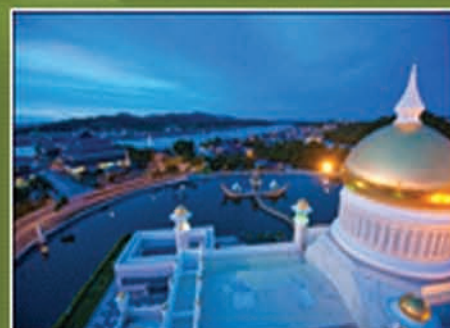
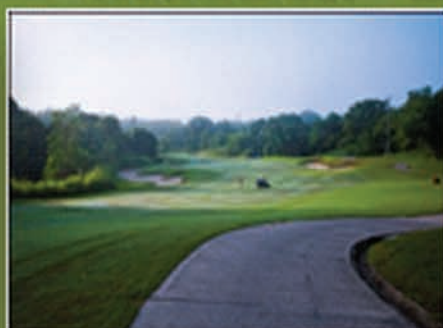
Buoyed by better access, new tours are being offered by the trade. Brunei inbound agent Allan Riches, managing director of Intrepid Tours, said he had developed lifestyle and ecotourism programmes for the Australian youth and family market, by combining Brunei with the Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak. The length of these Borneo programmes range from three nights to a week.

Mona Florafauna Tours Enterprise is promoting half-day birdwatching at Kuala Belait and Kampong Tamoi. It is also selling a three-day/two-night ecotourism package at the Tutong Forest Reserve in Tutong district. This includes wildlife observation of endangered species like Borneo clouded leopards, gibbons and sun bears.

Ken Travel & Trading, on the other hand, has a three-day/two-night Islamic & Brunei Malay Culture tour. This includes visits to the Islamic Arts Gallery at the Brunei Museum, the city mosques and Darulifta, the State Mufti's Office, which houses the private collection of Islamic religious materials of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam.



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Sultanate retools PR & marketing

Brunei Tourism explores overseas representation for the first time, targeting key countries, says S Puvaneswary

1 Why has Brunei Tourism singled out China/Hong Kong and Australia/New Zealand for marketing and PR representation? Royal Brunei Airlines provides direct air access from these markets to

Brunei. Traditionally, these markets have also been good sources of air arrivals, with China being one of the top markets for holidaymakers to the destination. Since China is a large outbound market

in the region, it cannot be neglected, explained Brunei Tourism's director of marketing and promotion, Jean Christophe Robles Espinosa. Australians and New Zealanders, on the

other hand, tend to use Brunei as a stopover on their way to Europe, he said. For these markets, Brunei Tourism wants to promote Brunei either as a mono destination or in combination with the Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak.

Robles said other marketing and PR representatives may also be placed in key markets in South-east Asia and Europe, but this will depend on the performance of the first two representatives – Beijing Longway International Travel Service for China/Hong Kong and The Walshe Group for Australia/New Zealand. The appointments are for a two-year period.

2 What are the roles of the marketing and PR representatives? They will communicate with the media to push out more news on the destination as well as interest outbound agents in featuring Brunei on their brochures and proposing it to their clients, said Robles.

3 What kind of activities will be provided for in the budget? Activities include holding road shows, seminars, familiarisation trips and joint marketing activities between Brunei Tourism and the outbound travel trade in the source markets. There will also be allocations for advertisements to promote Brunei.

4 How will the trade benefit from marketing representation? Radisson Hotel Brunei Darussalam general manager, Peter Feran, said: "Market representation will provide Brunei with more exposure in the selected destinations, which is what is needed to boost tourism in Brunei. "Unfortunately, many people have heard of Brunei, but they don't really know much about the destination." PJ Majestic Tours managing director, Peter Chieng, said aside from helping to market Brunei as a mono destination, the representatives were also "experts who would be able to tell us whether we are headed in the right direction".

5 Does the destination have enough hardware and software to welcome a larger share of tourists from China/Hong Kong and Australia/New Zealand? Robles said the projected increases from these markets will be manageable, and the destination will not be overwhelmed with tourists.

There are enough hotel rooms, as the national occupancy in Brunei is 40 per cent, said Ho Guan Hui, honorary secretary of the Brunei Association of Hotels. To reduce the shortage of rank-and-file and supervisory staff in Brunei hotels, the association will conduct more career talks at local institutions providing hospitality courses this year. Association members will also continue to support the efforts by providing opportunities for students to gain experience. However, Travelhub managing director, Adam Tan, said training for guides was also needed. "As nature is our main selling point, we need more nature guides with good translation skills, as providing tourists with good experiences is very important to attract more word-of-mouth publicity and repeat visitors," he said.

PATA TRAVEL MART 2011

September 6-9, Pragati Maidan
New Delhi, India

One of the fastest growing tourism markets in the world, India is hosting PTM2011 in the capital city of New Delhi

The travel and tourism industry in Asia Pacific has recovered from the global recession during 2008-2009, with international visitor arrivals surpassing the 400 million mark for the first time last year, generating a growth rate of 10%.

In 2010, the Indian-subcontinent or South Asia emerged as the fastest growing sub-region of 13% in foreign arrivals.

India, a key market both as a destination and a source market, presents huge opportunities:

Arrivals to India account for 66% of total international visitor arrivals to South Asia. Foreign arrivals to India surged 9% to over 5.5 million in 2010, and is expected to grow at annual rate of 5% to 2013.

The Indian outbound travel market is expanding at an even faster pace, growing at an annual rate of 12% in the past five years and is expected to continue to grow at a rate of 13% to 2013.

Arrivals to India, 2009 - 2013

Annual Growth Rate 5%

Year	Arrivals (Approx.)
2009	5,000,000
2010	5,500,000
2011E	5,800,000
2012E	6,000,000
2013E	6,200,000

India Outbound, 2009 - 2013

Annual Growth Rate 13%

Year	Outbound (Approx.)
2009	4,500,000
2010	5,000,000
2011E	5,500,000
2012E	6,000,000
2013E	6,500,000

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Cultural showcase



Chill out with local village folk and dare to sample sago worms at Kampong Sungai

Matan, writes **S Puvaneswary**

WHY Visiting Kampong Sungai Matan Fishing Village is an opportunity to get away from the city to experience a slower-paced, rustic setting. This 600-year-old fishing village, where houses are built on stilts over the river, is one of the oldest in Brunei.

WHAT This is the first community tourism project developed by villagers in partnership with local inbound tour operators and promoted by Brunei Tourism.

Consultative Council of Sungai Matan Fishing Village secretary, Pg Azmanishah Pg Hj Abdul Rahman, said tourism helped sustain the locals' way of life.

HOW Many inbound tour operators sell this tour with the Brunei Museum and the Malay



Name Kampong Sungai Matan Fishing Village

Rates About B\$75-95 (US\$60-77) per person for full-day and B\$180-200 for overnight packages

Contact details

Ken Travel & Trading
kentrvl@brunet.bn
ken.inbound@gmail.com

Technology Museum, both of which are just a 10-minute drive away. Day packages usually include traditional lunch.

From January, a three-bedroom fully-furnished house has also been converted into a homestay. A two-day/one-night package features village activities, such as catching or feeding fish, preparing local food, jungle trekking or just lazing about and taking in the beauty of the water village.

VERDICT Good for families.

Checking in



Great facilities work in favour of the only internationally-branded hotel in Brunei, says **S Puvaneswary**

LOCATION The hotel is within walking distance to many tourist attractions, such as the Royal Regalia, Kampong Ayer, the Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin Mosque and the Yayasan Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Complex.

ROOMS The atmosphere was very welcoming. I got off the lift on the second floor and caught a whiff of a fruity scent along the corridor leading to my room. There was also soft music playing in the background. Very nice!

In the room, a fruit plate was waiting for me, the perfect solution to stave off hunger pangs after a full day of activity.

There was complimentary Internet access in the room and the work table had ample space, great for business travellers.

The iron and ironing board tucked away in the cupboard



Name Radisson Hotel Brunei Darussalam

No. of rooms 142

Rates Superior rooms from B\$190++ (US\$153) with breakfast; deluxe rooms from B\$210++ with breakfast

Contact details

Tel: (673) 224-4272
Email: sales.brunei@radisson.com

was also a nice touch, as I did not have to bother housekeeping with my requests.

F&B Tasek Brasserie serves an à la carte menu and international and continental buffet. It is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

According to an inbound operator, the restaurant is reputed to have one of the best cakes and pastries in Brunei.

I tried the baked cheesecake and it was just fabulous. I also ordered a Tropical Sunrise mocktail – made of grenadine syrup with orange juice, Sprite and a blend of peach juice – which was also good to the last drop.

Deals Restaurant underwent a facelift late last year. This has resulted in a classy ambience great

for power lunches. Steak and grilled meat are popular here.

FACILITIES Fitness enthusiasts have lush, green foliage to feast their eyes on, whether it be swimming or working out at the gym.

For functions, the pillared Mutiara Ballroom can hold up to 150 people, theatre-style. It was recently fitted out with new audiovisual equipment. There are also five meeting rooms and a business club floor.

SERVICE Quick and friendly. You do not have to wait long for food orders at this hotel.

VERDICT A happy place to be at.

Singapore Gifts & Stationery Show

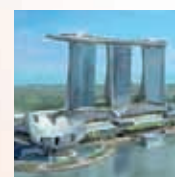
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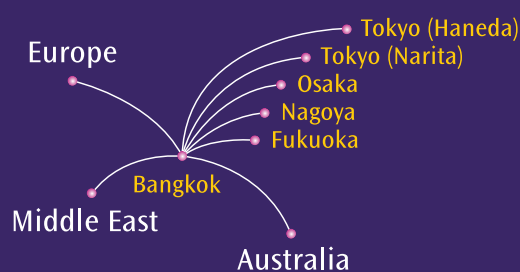
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Artist's impression of the new Dureraum Cinema Complex

Courtesy of COOP HIMMELBLOU

Striving to be better

A focus on innovative venues is making a difference in South Korea's second city. By **Vivian Lee**

Arrivals

In the space of just 11 months, Busan set a new record for international arrivals, welcoming 2,060,054 foreign visitors between January and November last year. This marked a 10.6 per cent increase over the same period in 2009, while also exceeding the previous annual total of 2,026,070. For the whole of 2010, Busan received more than 2.1 million foreign visitors. Successful events marketing in Japan and China as well as a greater number of cruises calling at Busan were said to have been factors. This year, the city is looking to attract more Chinese tourists, and will work with the Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) for fam trips and promotions.

MICE

Busan's successful hosting of the 2005 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit is continuing to reap rewards, with the city logging 223 international meetings during 2010 – an increase of 24 meetings over 2009 and the highest number ever. The total number of participants was 157,800 (including 43,000 foreigners) in 2010, 2.6 times higher than the previous year. Significantly, the number of

meetings with 1,000 or more delegates saw a sharp rise from 14 in 2009 to 26 in 2010, also a new record. KTO has put the economic benefit of Busan's meetings industry at 490 billion won (US\$441 million).

The city's relatively-unknown status has also been working to its advantage. According to the Busan Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB), meeting planners are getting tired of the usual suspects, spurring the body to position Busan as a 'Fresh and New Destination in Asia' as well as an 'Ocean City', capable of hosting conferences related to its unique geography.

Products

Busan offers approximately 300 unique venues, with one of its latest landmarks being the Dureraum Cinema Complex. Scheduled for completion in September, this architectural marvel is set to cement the Busan International Film Festival's position as one of the best film festivals in Asia. Costing 162.4 billion won, Dureraum will include a 4,000-seat auditorium, a nine-storey cinema building, an office complex, cafes and restaurants. Its defining feature is its roof, complete



"The organisers of meetings held in Busan have favoured the city as a convention destination, while the marketing strategies of Busan and its related organisations have been successfully employed."

Raymond Kim

Secretary general
Busan Convention and Visitors Bureau

with eye-catching LED light displays.

Plans are also underway to promote cruises to visitors who want a place for events for up to 400 pax. The Tiffany 21, with its live performance hall, conference room and upper deck, can cater to meetings, workshops, parties and weddings. Pirate-themed Nurimaru Cruise also provides dinner and concert spaces.

The CVB has also created a personalised taxi tour programme for MICE participants. Delegates with time to spare can sightsee with trained taxi drivers who are bilingual in English and Japanese.

Access

Gimhae International Airport offers direct connections to 10 countries and 26 cities, with 452 weekly return flights. It is making aggressive efforts to boost links, hoping to offer visitors the option of not having to travel through Seoul's Incheon International Airport.

A new Busan-Singapore route is likely to begin soon (following a successful pilot period by Asiana Airlines), while city officials are also lobbying to introduce new services connecting Busan with Los Angeles and Honolulu.

Existing routes are also seeing capacity growths. Air Busan, Asiana Airlines' low-cost carrier, this year launched services to Taipei and Hong Kong, and is scheduled to start serving Tokyo Narita in June; Asiana Airlines will add new flights from Busan to Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi in June; and in July, Lufthansa will up Busan-Munich frequencies.

Etc

In January, the Korea Pass Busan Tour Card was introduced, a new prepaid card that allows visitors to pay for travel-related expenses such as transportation, accommodation and shopping. It offers a variety of discounts at tourism-related companies, attractions and sites in Busan as well as at shops around the country. A dedicated MICE Card is also in the works, said Choi Boo Rim, director of tourism destination marketing and PR, Busan CVB.

In addition, the CVB is investing in its software. Secretary general Raymond Kim said: "To be a successful host city, Busan has developed MICE venues and is now holding a campaign to inspire citizens to be friendly and welcoming to foreign tourists."



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SEOUL, JAMSIL																			
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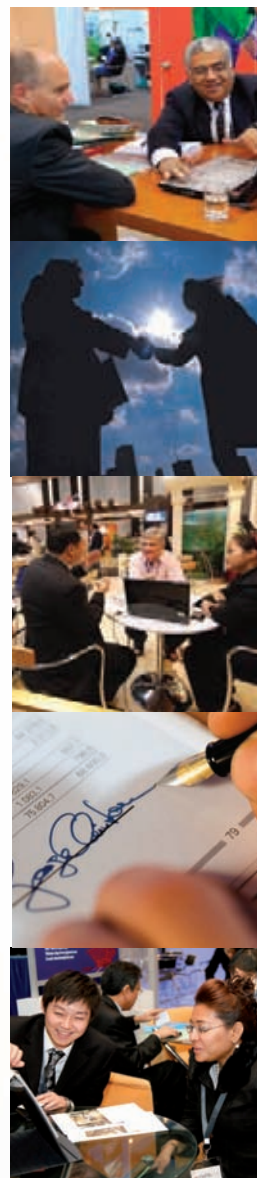
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Leah Villarta | Co-ordinator & Exec Asst, Robert Bosch Inc

"This year packed in both days full with appointments."

Jacob Abraham Van Hal | European Marketing Director, S.T Tours (1996) European Branch

"I was able to extend our contacts from all over the world. Am satisfied with the opportunity to promote our properties."

Christine Kim | JW Marriott Seoul

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Incheon Airport's right moves

Good timing and strategic planning have helped raise hub's international profile, analyses **Sim Kok Chwee**

Seoul's Incheon Airport opened in 2001, riding on the travel boom that followed the 1988 Olympic Games held in South Korea. It replaced Gimpo Airport, which now serves domestic flights and a lower volume of international links to secondary airports in Japan and China.

Incheon Airport handled 20.1 million passengers in 2002, which was its first full year of operations. As the airport grew, its aspiration to be a global hub followed a similar trajectory.

Timing and circumstance have helped to give the airport a leg up. For example, Incheon's planners saw potential in the Olympic Games in Beijing in 2008. The Phase II development plan completion date was fast-tracked by six months and the airport was ready by June 2008. Due to this, it was able to cater to the huge numbers headed for the Beijing Olympics in August.

Troubles at the neighbouring Narita Airport also made Incheon a viable alternative. Coveted by international airlines hoping to expand in north Asia, Narita's

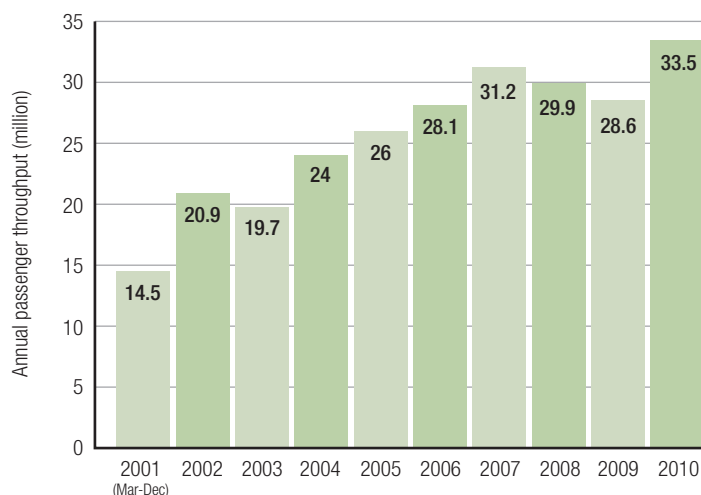
long-running dispute over airport land acquisition placed a stringent curfew on night operations and constrained slot availability, frustrating many.

In comparison, Incheon faced no such issues and offered uninterrupted operations, even with just one terminal and two runways. The completion of Phase II added a third, longer runway and a mid-field concourse linked to the main terminal by the Starline train service, as well as additional cargo handling facilities.

As of January 2011, the airport is served by 70 airlines and linked to 176 cities. The airport's largest tenants – Korean Air and Asiana Airlines – have also boosted their capacity, frequency and network to China. Thirty-three Chinese cities, including Macau and Hong Kong, are among destinations linked to Incheon, as well as 28 other cities in Japan.

By March 2011, when Incheon celebrated its first decade of operations, annual passenger throughput had already grown from 20.1 million passengers per annum (mppa) in 2002 to 33.48

Passenger throughput at Incheon Airport



Source: Incheon Airport

mppa in 2010. This represents a six per cent sustained positive growth over the decade.

The number of passengers who use Incheon as a transit point has also steadily increased – 3.4 million in 2006, 3.8 million in 2007, 4.4 million in 2008 and 5.2 million in 2009. The 5.2 million transfer passengers in 2009 represent 18.5 per cent of the

airport's passenger throughput. Currently, the airport is capable of handling 44 mppa.

Although this growth does not make Incheon one of the Airport Council International's (ACI) 30 busiest airports in the world in terms of international passenger traffic, the airport has been consistently named ACI's Best Airport in the World for six

years, from 2005 to 2010, beating Singapore Changi Airport and Hong Kong International Airport.

For airlines, the airport makes sense because of its efficiency. There is minimal delay arising from ramp and runway congestion, and connectivity to the entire north Asian region is a key draw as well.

Incheon will also add yet another distinction to its long list of accolades when the first Airbus A380 of Asiana Airlines lands there in 2014. It will earn the honour of being home to two Airbus A380 operators.

But far from resting on their laurels, the airport planners are at work once again. They are hoping to deliver its Phase III development – a fourth runway and a new terminal building by 2017 – taking the airport's total passenger handling capability to 62 mppa.

Against a backdrop of intense competition, timely anticipation by the people behind Incheon is giving South Korea plenty to smile about.

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Closing Date: 12th August 2011

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You are the judge

We value your opinions in bestowing the title of "industry's best". Your voice is the best embodiment of the travel industry's sentiments in recognising the top performers. Vote for your favourites in these two categories (and its segments):

Travel Supplier Awards

- Airline Awards
- Hotels • Resorts • Serviced Residences • Spa Awards
- BT-MICE Awards
- Travel Services Awards

Travel Agent Awards

TTG salutes the finest and most accomplished

In two other categories, exceptional individuals and organisations are identified and acknowledged for their accomplishments.

These two categories of awards are:

Outstanding Achievement Awards

Under this category, TTG's editorial team determines the winners in these awards:

- Travel Personality of the Year
- Destination of the Year
- Most Entrepreneurial Travel Company
- Best Marketing & Development Effort

Travel Hall of Fame

The Travel Hall of Fame honours organisations that have won at least 10 times at previous TTG Travel Awards. Although they will not be voted for again, these special award winners will be recognised at every TTG annual awards presentation ceremony. Votes for them will not be counted. Travel Hall of Fame - Inducted Members are:

- Singapore Changi Airport (2002)
- Singapore Airlines (2002)
- Hertz Asia-Pacific (2005)
- Royal Cliff Beach Resort, Pattaya (2006)
- Star Cruises (2008)
- Abacus International (2009)
- Silkair (2010)

How to vote

Instructions and Guidelines

VOTE ON PAPER

(Please use the correct voting form)
There are two voting categories and accompanying forms

Voting Form A: Travel Supplier Awards

For voting by travel agents, tour operators and destination management companies only.

Voting Form B: Travel Agent Awards

For voting by hoteliers, airline staff, car rental companies, cruise operators, national tourism organisations, GDS companies and all other travel professionals (except travel agents, tour operators and destination management companies).

CRITERIA

To ensure that nominees are judged on an equal basis, each category has its own set of criteria. Please use them as a guide when casting your votes.

AWARDS CITERIA

TRAVEL SUPPLIER AWARDS

Airline Awards

Criteria

Best **airline** in its respective category in terms of:

- Providing the best service, network and schedules.
- Most agent-friendly in terms of reservations, confirmations and commission payments.
- Most professional sales and marketing team in terms of innovative ideas, incentive programmes and servicing.

1. Best **North American** Airline
Best airline based in North America operating Asia-Pacific routes.
2. Best **European** Airline
Best airline based in Europe operating Asia-Pacific routes.
3. Best **Middle Eastern** Airline
Best airline based in Middle East operating Asia-Pacific routes.
4. Best **South Asian** Airline
Best airline based in the Indian subcontinent operating Asia-Pacific routes.
5. Best **South-east** Asian Airline
Best airline based in Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, The Philippines, Singapore, Thailand or Vietnam operating Asia-Pacific routes.
6. Best **North Asian** Airline
Best airline based in South Korea, Japan, Chinese Taipei, Macau or Hong Kong operating Asia-Pacific routes.
7. Best **China** Airline
Best airline based in China operating Asia-Pacific routes.
8. Best **Pacific** Airline
Best airline based in the Pacific operating Asia-Pacific routes.
9. Best **Regional** Airline
Best airline based regionally operating Asia-Pacific routes.
10. Best **Asian Low-cost Carrier**
Best airline based in Asia-Pacific that operates on a low-cost strategy.

Hotels • Resorts • Serviced Residences • Spa Awards

Criteria

Best **Hotel Chain** in its respective category in terms of:

- Most consistent in products and services.
- Most professional sales and marketing team in terms of innovative ideas, incentive programmes and servicing.

Best **Hotel/Resort/Serviced Residence/Spa** in its respective category in terms of:

- Best services and facilities.
- Best range of value-added benefits.
- Most professional sales and marketing team in terms of innovative ideas and servicing.

HOTEL CHAINS

11. Best **Global** Hotel Chain
Best hotel chain operating a network of properties globally.
12. Best **Regional** Hotel Chain
Best hotel chain operating a network of properties in the region.
13. Best **Local** Hotel Chain
Best hotel chain operating a network of properties within any one Asia-Pacific country.
14. Best Hotel **Representation Company**
Best company providing the most agent-friendly products and services and showing the best marketing effort in generating sales for member hotels via agents.
15. Best **Luxury** Hotel Brand
Best hotel chain operating a network of luxurious properties within any one Asia-Pacific country.
16. Best **Mid-range** Hotel Brand
Best hotel chain operating a network of mid-range properties within any one Asia-Pacific country.
17. Best **Budget** Hotel Brand
Best hotel chain operating a network of economical properties within any one Asia-Pacific country.

HOTELS – Individual Property

18. Best **Luxury** Hotel
Best hotel catering to the upmarket traveller. This hotel must also boast the best visual appeal and ambience reflecting upmarket status.
19. Best **Mid-range** Hotel
Best mid-range hotel catering to the traveller who seeks three- to four-star quality and comfort.
20. Best **Budget** Hotel
Best hotel catering to the budget traveller.
21. Best **Independent** Hotel
Best non-chain (ie not part of a network of properties) hotel.
22. Best **Boutique** Hotel
Best small, fashionable and unique hotel.
23. Best **City** Hotel – **Bangkok**
24. Best **City** Hotel – **Delhi**
25. Best **City** Hotel – **Hanoi/Ho Chi Minh City**
26. Best **City** Hotel – **Jakarta**
27. Best **City** Hotel – **Kuala Lumpur**
28. Best **City** Hotel – **Manila**
29. Best **City** Hotel – **Seoul**
30. Best **City** Hotel – **Singapore**
31. Best **City** Hotel – **Taipei**
32. Best **City** Hotel – **Tokyo**
33. Best **New City** Hotel
Best city hotel that opened in 2009/2010.
34. Best **Airport** Hotel
Best hotel – located within the vicinity of an airport – that caters to travellers in transit.

RESORTS – Individual Property

35. Best **Beach** Resort
Best resort located by a beach. This resort must also boast the best visual appeal and ambience reflecting local flavour.
36. Best **Resort** Hotel (Non-Beach)
Best resort not located by a beach. This resort must also boast the best visual appeal and ambience reflecting local flavour.
37. Best **New Beach** Resort
Best beach resort that opened in 2009/2010.
38. Best **Integrated** Resort

Best hotel offering comprehensive accommodation, shopping, dining, entertainment and sports.

SERVICED RESIDENCES

39. Best **Serviced Residence** Operator
Best serviced property catering to mid- and long-term staying guests.

SPAS

40. Best **Spa** Operator
Best managed and operated spa or network of spas in the region.

BT-MICE Awards

Criteria

- Best services and facilities catering specifically to the BT-MICE market.
- Most professional sales and marketing team in terms of innovative ideas and servicing the BT-MICE market.
- Most desirable and attractive incentives and value added services to business travellers and MICE planners.

41. Best **Airline – Business Class**
Best business class airline across the board.
Refer to Airline Criteria.
42. Best **Business** Hotel
Best hotel catering to the business traveller.
Refer to Hotel Criteria.
43. Best **Meetings & Conventions** Hotel
Best hotel catering to meeting and convention needs.
Refer to Hotel Criteria.
44. Best **BT-MICE City**
The city most friendly and desirable to business travellers and for MICE planners to host their events.
45. Best **Convention & Exhibition** Centre
 - Best facilities.
 - Best value for money.
 - Most flexible in catering to MICE planners.
 - Most professional sales and marketing team in terms of innovative ideas and servicing.
46. Best **Convention & Exhibition Bureau**
 - Most efficient, flexible and friendly in terms of response to enquiries and information.
 - Most effective in raising awareness of MICE at government and community levels.
 - Most professional sales and marketing team in terms of innovative ideas and servicing.

Travel Services Awards

Criteria

- Best product, services and facilities
- Most professional sales and marketing team in terms of innovative ideas and servicing

47. Best **Airport**
 - Best facilities.
 - Most user-friendly, efficient and hassle-free immigration.
 - Most organised baggage claim.
 - Best planned floor layout, with easy ground access.
48. Best **GDS (Global Distribution System)**
 - Most comprehensive network offering ease of operation and user friendliness.
 - Most efficient and reliable system.
49. Best **Cruise Operator**
 - Best product in terms of service, routes and schedules.
 - Best onboard programme and facilities.
 - Most agent-friendly in terms of reservations, confirmations and commission payments.
 - Most professional sales and marketing team in terms of innovative ideas, incentive programmes and servicing.
50. Best **NTO**
 - Most efficient, flexible and friendly in terms of response to enquiries and information.
 - Most effective in raising awareness of tourism at government and community levels.
 - Most professional sales and marketing team in terms of innovative ideas and servicing.
51. Best **Theme Attraction**
 - Best ambience.
 - Best facilities and services.
 - Most professional sales and marketing team in terms of innovative ideas and servicing.

TRAVEL AGENT AWARDS

Criteria

Best **Travel Agency** in its respective category in terms of:

- Professionalism and excellence in staff.
- Best value-added services to client
- Best use of computer technology applications to help improve efficiency and effectiveness in services provided to client.

52. Best Travel Agency – **Australia**
53. Best Travel Agency – **China**
54. Best Travel Agency – **Chinese Taipei**
55. Best Travel Agency – **Hong Kong**
56. Best Travel Agency – **India**
57. Best Travel Agency – **Indochina (Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam)**
58. Best Travel Agency – **Indonesia**
59. Best Travel Agency – **Japan**
60. Best Travel Agency – **Malaysia**
61. Best Travel Agency – **Singapore**
62. Best Travel Agency – **South Korea**
63. Best Travel Agency – **Thailand**
64. Best Travel Agency – **The Philippines**
65. Best **Corporate** Travel Agency
Best travel agency specialising in serving the needs of corporate travellers.
66. Best **Online** Travel Agent
Best online-based travel agent offering the most user-friendly and effective interface to meet client needs. This online travel agent must also boast the best sales and marketing network in terms of service innovation.

OR VOTE ONLINE!

www.ttgasia.com/ttg-awards

12th August 2011

VOTING FORM A: TRAVEL SUPPLIER AWARDS

For voting by • Travel agents • Tour operators • Destination Management Companies

You Can Also Vote Online Now @ www.ftgasia.com/ftg-awards

Do refer to the voting criteria on the facing page when casting your vote

Voting Rules

- Only one voting entry per person is allowed – using the voting form or online voting.
- All votes are confidential.
- Voting forms are published in TTG print titles and are available online at www.ftgasia.com/ftg-awards.
- No responsibility will be accepted by the organisers for voting forms lost, delayed or damaged in the post.
- There are no pre-nominated contenders for any voting awards.
- The results for TTG Travel Awards 2011 are final and no correspondence will be entertained.
- Voting forms will be independently tabulated and evaluated by an independent auditor in Singapore.
- The closing date is **12th August 2011**

Submission

Completed voting forms are to be returned to:

SINGAPORE
Ms Lina Tan
TTG Travel Awards 2011
TTG Asia Media Pte Ltd
1 Science Park Road #04-07 The Capricorn
Singapore Science Park II Singapore 117528
Tel: (65) 6395-7575
Fax: (65) 6536-2972

HONG KONG
Ms Carol Cheng
TTG Travel Awards 2011
TTG Asia Media Pte Ltd
China.com Inc
11/F ING Tower No. 308 Des Voeux Road
Central Hong Kong
Tel: (852) 2237-7252
Fax: (852) 2806-0646

Airlines		Organisation / Country
1.	Best North American Airline	.....
2.	Best European Airline	.....
3.	Best Middle Eastern Airline	.....
4.	Best South Asian Airline	.....
5.	Best South-east Asian Airline	.....
6.	Best North Asian Airline	.....
7.	Best China Airline	.....
8.	Best Pacific Airline	.....
9.	Best Regional Airline	.....
10.	Best Asian Low-Cost Carrier	.....
Hotels • Resorts • Serviced Residences • Spas		Organisation / Country
HOTEL CHAINS		
11.	Best Global Hotel Chain	.....
12.	Best Regional Hotel Chain	.....
13.	Best Local Hotel Chain	.....
14.	Best Hotel Representation Company	.....
15.	Best Luxury Hotel Brand	.....
16.	Best Mid-range Hotel Brand	.....
17.	Best Budget Hotel Brand	.....
HOTELS – Individual Property		
18.	Best Luxury Hotel	.....
19.	Best Mid-range Hotel	.....
20.	Best Budget Hotel	.....
21.	Best Independent Hotel	.....
22.	Best Boutique Hotel	.....
23.	Best City Hotel – Bangkok	.....
24.	Best City Hotel – Delhi	.....
25.	Best City Hotel – Hanoi/Ho Chi Minh City	.....
26.	Best City Hotel – Jakarta	.....
27.	Best City Hotel – Kuala Lumpur	.....
28.	Best City Hotel – Manila	.....
29.	Best City Hotel – Singapore	.....
30.	Best City Hotel – Seoul	.....
31.	Best City Hotel – Taipei	.....
32.	Best City Hotel – Tokyo	.....
33.	Best New City Hotel	.....
34.	Best Airport Hotel	.....
RESORTS – Individual Property		
35.	Best Beach Resort	.....
36.	Best Resort Hotel (Non-Beach)	.....
37.	Best New Beach Resort	.....
38.	Best Integrated Resort	.....
SERVICED RESIDENCES		
39.	Best Serviced Residence Operator	.....
SPAS		
40.	Best Spa Operator	.....
BT-MICE		
41.	Best Airline – Business Class	.....
42.	Best Business Hotel	.....
43.	Best Meetings & Conventions Hotel	.....
44.	Best BT-MICE City	.....
45.	Best Convention & Exhibition Centre	.....
46.	Best Convention & Exhibition Bureau	.....
TRAVEL SERVICES		
47.	Best Airport	.....
48.	Best GDS	.....
49.	Best Cruise Operator	.....
50.	Best NTO	.....
51.	Best Theme Attraction	.....

VOTER INFORMATION

Name:

Passport no.:

Job title:

Company:

Address:

Country:

Telephone no.:

Fax no.:

Email:

Signature:

Closing Date: 12th August 2011

VOTING FORM B: TRAVEL AGENT AWARDS

For voting by • Hoteliers • Airline staff • Car rental companies • Cruise operators • National Tourism Organisations • GDS companies • All other travel professionals (except Travel agents, Tour operators and Destination Management Companies)

You Can Also Vote Online Now @ www.ftgasia.com/ftg-awards

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Singapore Science Park II Singapore 117528
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HONG KONG
Ms Carol Cheng
TTG Travel Awards 2011
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Hong Kong
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58.	Best Travel Agency – Indochina (Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam)
59.	Best Travel Agency – Japan
60.	Best Travel Agency – Malaysia
61.	Best Travel Agency – Singapore
62.	Best Travel Agency – South Korea
63.	Best Travel Agency – Thailand
64.	Best Travel Agency – The Philippines
65.	Best Corporate Travel Agency
66.	Best Online Travel Agent

VOTER INFORMATION

Name:

Passport no.:

Job title:

Company:

Address:

Country:

Telephone no.:

Fax no.:

Email:

Signature:

Closing Date: 12th August 2011



TRAVEL AWARDS 2011

Vote Now!

TRAVEL SUPPLIER AWARDS

Airline Awards

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2. Best European Airline
3. Best Middle Eastern Airline
4. Best South Asian Airline
5. Best South-east Asian Airline
6. Best North Asian Airline
7. Best China Airline
8. Best Pacific Airline
9. Best Regional Airline
10. Best Asian Low-Cost Carrier

Hotels • Resorts • Serviced Residences • Spa Awards

HOTEL Chains

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15. Best Luxury Hotel Brand
16. Best Mid-range Hotel Brand
17. Best Budget Hotel Brand

HOTELS – Individual Property

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27. Best City Hotel – Kuala Lumpur
28. Best City Hotel – Manila
29. Best City Hotel – Seoul
30. Best City Hotel – Singapore
31. Best City Hotel – Taipei
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33. Best New City Hotel
34. Best Airport Hotel

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39. Best Serviced Residence Operator

SPAS

40. Best Spa Operator

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46. Best Convention & Exhibition Bureau

Travel Services Awards

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48. Best GDS
49. Best Cruise Operator
50. Best NTO
51. Best Theme Attraction

TRAVEL AGENT AWARDS

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(Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam)
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63. Best Travel Agency – Thailand
64. Best Travel Agency – The Philippines
65. Best Corporate Travel Agency
66. Best Online Travel Agent

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VisitBritain's lofty goals

You're Invited campaign sets sights on four million tourists in four years, reports **Sirima Eamtako**

VisitBritain is drumming up global tourism marketing activities in a bid to attract an additional four million international visitors and generate £2 billion (US\$3.24 billion) in revenue during its four-year Britain You're Invited campaign, running until 2014.

Laurence Bresh, VisitBritain marketing director, said the campaign was primarily geared towards visitors from Europe, Scandinavia, North America (US and Canada) and Asia-Pacific (Japan, Australia and Singapore).

Launched in January, the campaign aims to "build the image" of the country in the first year, with key marketing programmes to be launched between May and October. Bresh said it would leverage on the buzz created by the recent royal wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton.

The British tourism agency rolled out its image-building strategy with the introduction of its goodwill ambassador programme during the annual Destination Britain & Ireland APMEA, held in Bangalore, India from May 16 to 19.

Bresh said more celebrities are expected to be named as ambassadors. There are currently five, including three Asians – Bollywood filmmaker Karan Johar, Asia-based television presenter Asha Gill and 2012 Olympic Chinese equestrian riding candidate Alex Hua Tian – as well as UK actors Judi Dench and Dev Patel.

The global marketing campaign will be launched in September, followed by a specific programme for the visiting-friends-and-relatives market in October. These will be on top of other ongoing activities with the global travel trade, such as its training programme BritAgent, which lists more than 300 agents worldwide.

NTO gives serious thought to Asia

Aiming to grow visitor numbers from Asia, VisitBritain is planning sales missions to China and Japan later in the year. It has already made its presence felt in India with the annual B2B event, Destination Britain and Ireland (DEBI) APMEA, held in Bangalore from May 16 to 19.

Chief executive Sandie Dawe said that while there was no specific activity for Asia under the Britain You're Invited campaign, the introduction of three Asian celebrities as goodwill ambassadors demonstrated the NTO's recognition of Asia as "a significant cluster of markets".

"We have high hopes for the India and China markets to grow," Dawe said. "Even Vietnam is becoming (strong) as the second-tier of new markets

among Turkey and Indonesia."

A total of four million visitors are expected during the four-year Britain You're Invited campaign. When asked how the Asian market would contribute to this, Dawe said that once VisitBritain had signed up with more travel trade partners, it would invest to find out where targeted visitors are coming from.

She added that the British tourism agency was also coming up with ideas to rope in airline partners to support the DEBI event, rotated annually among Asia-Pacific, Middle Eastern and African destinations, in order to make the tradeshow "more cost-effective".

Last year, the UK attracted 1.4 million visitors from Asia, up from 1.3 million in 2009, but down from 2006, when it recorded more than 1.6 million Asian visitors.

Last year, Asia represented a 4.9 per cent share of the UK's total number of international visitors and a 9.3 per cent share of total spending.

Among the APMEA cluster of Asia, Australasia, the Middle East and Africa markets, the top destinations were Australia, India (366,000 visitors), Japan (220,000), UAE, South Africa, New Zealand, Hong Kong (129,000), Singapore (122,000) and China (108,000).

The top spenders in the APMEA markets were Australia, India (£358 million, or US\$580 million), UAE, China (£181 million), Japan (£180 million), South Africa, Singapore (£153 million), Hong Kong (£127 million) and New Zealand.

– **Sirima Eamtako**

Sandie Dawe, chief executive of VisitBritain, said the marketing campaign would be funded by VisitBritain's £50 million budget, to be matched by another £50 million from the travel trade.

So far, partners of the campaign include British Airways, easyJet, lastminute.com, Wimbledon and Premier League. "We are currently talking to Virgin, Emirates and Etihad," Dawe said.

This year's image-building programme is expected to spur visitor interest in the run-up to the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and Queen Elizabeth's Diamond Jubilee, marking her 60th year on the throne.

VisitBritain has dubbed 2012 as the "showcase year", to be followed by the "close-the-sale" years of 2013 and 2014.

Dawe explained that the four-million target could be seen as two million for recovery and two million for growth, as the number of tourists was currently "flat".

She noted that even with some 30 million international visitors last year, Britain was still two million short compared to its record year.

In 2006 and 2007, Britain recorded more than 32 million visitors per year. The number dropped to roughly 32 million tourists in 2008 and 30 million in 2009.

Despite expecting majority of tourists to visit the UK during the second half of the campaign, VisitBritain announced that by the end of 2012, it is aiming to attract 750,000 extra visitors from overseas; generate £375 million in additional visitor spend; achieve £350 million worth of international media coverage; and gain partner support for its activities worth £5 million in cash and £5 million in kind.



Pontcysyllte Aqueduct



Thermae Bath Spa

Finnair takes off from Singapore, cements "shortcut to Europe" tag

Finnair's new Singapore-Helsinki route will take off this week on May 30, helping to seal the airline's positioning as "the shortcut to Europe" among Asian travel agents.

Finnair has more than 50 daily connections to Europe. With this route, it would be the only airline offering a daily service between Singapore and northern Europe.

"In addition to Singapore, we expect to attract passengers, particularly from Australia," said Petteri Kostermä, head of Finnair's Singapore sales unit.

For passengers from Asia, the route offers connections via the carrier's network of 50 European destinations. Passengers to Singapore will be able to fly to Australia and South-east Asia via Finnair's partner airlines. The route will be serviced by Airbus A340 aircraft.

Singapore will be the carrier's 10th scheduled flight destination in Asia. Finnair is also adding five flights per week to Hong Kong from May 30 to October 9,

increasing the number of flights to 12 per week.

"Our Asian strategy is working well. The addition of flights and the new Singapore route reflect the continual growth of via-travel directed towards Asia," said Finnair's senior vice president, sales & marketing, Mika Perho.

Finnair operates a total of 74 flights per week to Asia. Other Asian destinations it serves include Seoul, Delhi, Beijing, Shanghai, Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya and Bangkok.

Lifestyles launch

AlliedTPro, a business unit of Kuoni Destination Management in the US, on May 22 launched its *Lifestyles* brochure during the TIA International Pow-Wow in San Francisco.

Lifestyles provides tour operators with innovative ideas for 2012 programmes. It features over 200 select establishments grouped into categories. These are complemented by its Explore product range of unique experiences in America.

"AlliedTPro continues to develop programmes based on the ever-changing demands of the

increasingly sophisticated traveller," said Adam Rogers, vice president of product and marketing.

"With over 50 new properties featured, we are delighted to give our tour operator partners new ideas and get a headstart on their 2012 planning with our *Lifestyles* brochure."

Customers who book from the *Lifestyles* product range also benefit from AlliedTPro's VIP Concierge Service, capable of handling requests like limousine transfers, private guides, reservations at exclusive restaurants and hard-to-get event tickets.

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Visit www.finnair.sg or contact your local travel agent for more information.

*following day



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HOST COMMITTEE



Ministry Of Culture And Tourism
Republic Of Indonesia
Sapta Pesona Building
Jl. Medan Merdeka Barat No. 17, Jakarta 10110
Tel: +62 21 383 8167 • Fax: +62 21 384 9715
Email: promosi@kemdikbud.go.id
Website: www.budpar.go.id

TRAVEX SECRETARIAT



TTG Asia Media Pte Ltd
1 Science Park Road #04-07
The Capricorn, Singapore Science Park II
Singapore 117528
Tel: +65 6395 7575 • Fax: +65 6536 0896
Email: atf@ttgasia.com
Website: www.atfindonesia.com

