



New frontiers of growth

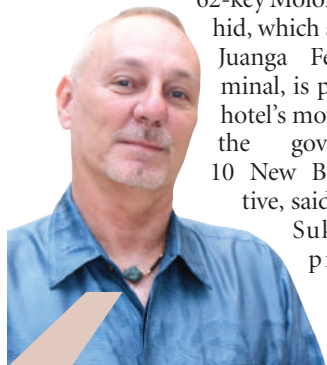
Looking to drive tourism beyond Bali, both the Indonesian government and private sector are pushing development to peripheral destinations in the country

By Mimi Hudoyo

Indonesia is intensifying efforts in developing tourism beyond Bali, with the government pumping investment dollars on Lake Toba, Mandalika, Labuan Bajo and Borobudur (Yogyakarta-Solo-Semarang triangle areas) this year as part of its 10 New Bali's directive.

Efforts plowed by the government into these destinations has also spurred the private sector to seek out business opportunities in these aforementioned places and beyond, including Morotai, which is part of the 10 New Balis, Palu (Central Sulawesi) and Sorong (Papua).

Sahid Hotels & Resorts has opened its first three-star property in Morotai. The 62-key Moloka'I by Sahid, which sits beside Juanga Ferry Terminal, is part of the hotel's move to back the government's 10 New Bali initiative, said Hariyadi Sukamdani, president



We are lucky that Indonesia is large enough for us to have opportunities everywhere. As part of our 20-year development, the big plan is to spread our revenue (generation) across Indonesia.

Umberto Cadamuro, COO inbound, Pacto

director of Sahid Hotels & Resorts.

"The growth of tourism to Morotai has prompted Sahid Hotels & Resorts to expand to the island. Morotai is one of the primary (tourism) destinations in eastern Indonesia, famed especially for its marine attractions," he said.

Tauzia Hotels is also aligning its property pipeline with the projected growth of Indonesian tourism by building properties in less-developed regions, said Armand Steinmeyer, director of business development and investment at Tauzia International Management.

For instance, while Raja Ampat is the key attraction for West Papua, Tauzia is anchoring Sorong as the development platform in the region. Likewise, the group is looking to develop hotels in Medan over Lake Toba. "Medan is the gateway to North Sumatra, with room still for development there," Steinmeyer said.

As well, Tauzia is planning to build properties in Lombok, Palu, and Pontianak or Singkawang in West Kalimantan.

He added: "Our vision for 2020 is to support these destinations to become globally competitive in South-east Asia."

For Pacto DMC, the catalyst for ex-

pansion beyond Bali stemmed from the "unhealthy" over-reliance on the famed tourist island, which currently comprises 60 per cent of its offerings.

Umberto Cadamuro, COO inbound of Pacto, said: "We have learnt from natural disasters like the Mount Agung eruption and tsunami (in Lombok) that we cannot depend on Bali alone.

"We are lucky that Indonesia is large enough for us to have opportunities everywhere. As part of our 20-year development, the big plan is to spread our revenue (generation) across Indonesia."

For starters, the company will add product development divisions in each of its branch offices in Medan, Bandung, Surabaya, Yogyakarta and Makassar to broaden and strengthen its operations, Umberto informed.

"As such, if anything happens in one destination, we still have others to offer," he said, adding that Pacto's development pipeline does not always follow the path of the government's.

Umberto also does not see the necessity of waiting for the infrastructure to be in place in order to develop new tourism products in a destination.

"Labuan Bajo started small and as facilities and infrastructure develop, arrivals are also growing," he added. "For Lake Toba, we have the opportunity to land one hour from the island (at Silangit Airport). That is already helpful because we can do Medan-Toba, then fly to Jakarta directly.

"We can start working with a market (segment) now, and eventually, the volume will come."

Driving to opportunity

By Pamela Chow

Ride-sharing services may have taken most of Asia by storm, but the low market penetration of such platforms in Central Asia has presented car rental companies with a ticket to growth.

"Central Asia presents great opportunities for Avis Budget Group to promote self-drive holidays. As ride-sharing and even car rental services are not widely available in this region, there is a potential

for Avis Budget Group to be a key partner to help drive tourism demand to the country," noted Angeline Tang, regional director - leisure travel & partnerships, Asia, Avis Budget Group.



Tang: potential in Kazakhstan

Tang sees potential for Avis to expand in the region "by working with local partners through licensee agreements", e.g. Avis Mongolia was recently launched through a licensee agreement with a local partner, Baobab.

Tang revealed: "We are looking to add a few more Avis offices in the region by year-end, and we also have similar plans for our Budget brand, which targets more value-conscious travellers."

Recognising how the rising preference for lesser-known destinations and unique experiences has spurred a growing demand for self-drive itineraries among Asian travellers, the group will focus its Asia operations on outbound self-drive holidays for its Avis and Budget brands.

"Self-drive holidays outside of the capital cities can also help the overtourism challenge in some cities," said Tang.

beep

The *one-stop portal* to help close your next rental with *ease*.



English, 简体中文, 繁體中文, 日本語, 한국어, ไทย



Destination Guides, Driving Regulations, Road Trip Itineraries



Commissionable Rates

Visit us at **stand B66** or **abgbeep.com/asia** to learn more!



News

Central Asia steppes up

A relaxation in visa policies and improved air links are attracting travellers from Singapore to the Stans, but outbound agents call for more outreach and information



Big Almaty Lake, Kazakhstan

By Pamela Chow

More Singaporean travellers are ticking Central Asia off their bucket list as the region enjoys greater accessibility and connectivity to the city-state.

The past year has seen a global push by Air Astana through new connections with Tyumen and Kazan in Russia, codeshare agreements with S7 Airlines and Cathay Pacific, and the launch of its low-cost arm FlyArystan.

Several countries in Central Asia have also relaxed their visa policies. Foreign travellers from as many as 45 countries can now enjoy visa-free entry into Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan for up to 30 days, and Kyrgyzstan for up to 60 days.

These developments have sparked sig-

nificant tourism interest in the Stans – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan – which “are becoming very popular tourism destinations”, observed Laziz Otayarov, operations manager for Central Asia, G Adventures.

He shared that the agency has seen a 10 per cent year-on-year increase in travellers from Singapore to Kazakhstan, and this figure is expected to rise further “as airline capacity continues to grow”.

He added: “Singaporean travellers no longer require a visa to (visit) most stans. Air Astana also offers good deals on their flights (that are) connecting or codeshared either via Bangkok or Kuala Lumpur.”

These groups usually visit a single country for a short time of up to seven

days, shared Otayarov, spending their time appreciating the mountains of Kyrgyzstan – dubbed the “Switzerland of Central Asia” – or enjoying the unique cuisine of Kazakhstan.

For Scott Dunn Singapore, Kazakhstan is a rising star of Central Asia thanks to its diverse experiences and efforts in enhancing tourism facilities.

The company’s destination expert Chong Shyh Jie shared: “Kazakhstan is relatively “un-travelled” in comparison to other Central Asian countries, hence Singaporeans are intrigued and (want to) explore it. It is (also) improving transport infrastructure and customer service, and working to bring prices down to make accommodation more affordable.”

As demand for Central Asia climbs, agencies have expressed desire for more outreach campaigns by tourism bodies in the region, especially to aid in arranging esoteric activities there.

For example, more information about Kazakhstan’s campaign on “ethno tourism”, where tourists are given the opportunity to participate in traditional Kazakh culture, would be welcome, said Chong.

Diana Ho, general manager of Royal Wings Travel Singapore, agreed that more B2B networking could be done.

“It will be good to see more tour promotions and more agent outreach. We haven’t received much information about Kazakhstan as compared to other (destinations in Asia),” Ho said.



TTG Travel Trade Publishing is a business group of TTG Asia Media

EDITORIAL

Karen Yue Group Editor
Xinyi Liang-Pholsena Editor, TTG Asia
S Puvaneswary Editor, Malaysia/Brunei
Mimi Hudoyo Editor, Indonesia
Pamela Chow Reporter, Singapore
Rachel AJ Lee, Cheryl Ong Sub Editors
Yingyong Unanongrak Photographer
Redmond Sia, Goh Meng Yong Creative Designers
Lina Tan Editorial Assistant

CONTRIBUTORS

Adelaine Ng, Caroline Boey, Julian Ryall, Kathryn Wortley, Marissa Carruthers, Prudence Lui, Rosa Ocampo, Suchat Sritama

SALES & MARKETING

Pierre Quek Publisher and Head Integrated Solutions
Chimmy Tsui Publisher and Head Integrated Solutions (China)
Ar-lene Lee Senior Business Manager
Jonathan Yap Senior Business Manager
Shirley Tan Senior Business Manager
Cheryl Lim Advertisement Administration Manager
Cheryl Tan Corporate Marketing Manager
Chelsea Huang Marketing Executive

PUBLISHING SERVICES

Jonathan Wan Head, Operational Support Services
Kun Swee Qi Publishing Services Executive
Nur Hazirah Web Executive
Katherine Leong Circulation Executive

TTG ASIA MEDIA

Darren Ng Managing Director

For sales & marketing enquires, please contact traveltradesales@ttgasia.com

India turns to SE Asia, China

By Rohit Kaul

As India looks to double its international tourist arrivals to 20 million in the coming years, it is putting a stronger focus on courting visitors from Asia in order to meet the target.

A section of the trade feels that India should adopt a more aggressive approach in promoting the country in regional markets like South-east Asia and China, while not losing sight of its traditional feeder sources like the US and Europe.

“I always believe that we need a two-pronged strategy for inbound tourism. We need to focus on our core markets of the UK, Germany, the US and Russia, and double our business from these markets,” said Dipak Deva, managing director, Travel Corporation (India).

“At the same time, we need to see which other markets we should target. China is a great market that we should focus on, apart from our other neighbouring markets,” he stated.

Subhash Goyal, chairman, STIC Tavel Group, agreed: “Outbound markets like China, Malaysia and Indonesia should be an integral part of our international marketing to enhance inbound tourist arrival figures.”

Despite China’s booming outbound tourism, the number of Chinese tourists visiting India reached only 2,47,000

in 2017, a mere two per cent of the total 10.2 million foreign tourist arrivals that year, according to data from the Ministry of Tourism.

The Ministry of Tourism is hence looking at strategies to significantly boost tourist arrivals from China. A Chinese tourism delegation recently visited the country to engage with its Indian counterparts on ways to tap the Chinese outbound market, while the ministry has in the past conducted roadshows in Chinese cities like Beijing, Shanghai, Wuhan and Guangzhou.



Goyal: greater focus on China

Meanwhile, the private sector has embarked on its own efforts to attract more travellers from the region.

“We on our part are participating in tradeshow in China and South-east Asia to explore opportunities with trade partners there. We have also come up with brochures and other marketing material in Chinese,” said Arun Anand, managing director, Midtown Travels.

Nakul Anand, chairman, Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism & Hospitality, stressed “the importance of the multibillion dollar South-east Asian travel market”, which is driven by a rising middle class with a young population that is keen to explore the world.

“We need to understand the aspirations of South-east Asian tourists and market India accordingly,” he urged.

Nay to proposed tourism tax

By Prudence Lui

The Macau trade is casting doubt on the effectiveness of the government’s proposal to impose a tourist tax to tackle overtourism, instead seeing other ways to manage congestion in the city.

Cooper Zhang, director of inbound department at CITS (Macau), is worried that the proposed tax would undermine travellers’ desire to visit Macau. “There are a large number of same-day travellers to Macau who spend money and support Macau economy,” he said.

Also opposing the proposed tax, Top Holidays - P & E International Travel’s general manager Paul Wong explained: “This violates what Macau has been doing – welcoming visitors with friendly hospitality – and may send an unpleasant signal to tourists.”

“Overseas countries like Japan reinvest the tax income to improve domestic infrastructure rather than increasing income, but Macau’s resources are sufficient and I don’t see the need to copy the practice,” he added.

“The Chinese government is encouraging more integration, i.e. multi-destination travel, within the Greater Bay Area but the tax means a barrier,” Wong said, questioning too how the government would implement the collection of tax.

The city’s hoteliers are concerned that the proposed tax would impact the hospitality sector, which is already facing head-

winds amid heightened trade tensions.

“The US-China trade conflict led to a decrease in visitors’ average spending. The tourist tax would directly affect low- to mid-tier travellers,” Macau Hotel S, general manager, Charles Huang opined.

“Five-star hotels are competing with three-star properties by offering discounted rates on weekdays. Therefore, traffic flows may be affected and lead to more pressure for hotels below three-star categories,” he added.

Huang does not think that Macau is suffering from overtourism. “In fact, Macau’s problem is not (overtourism) but that the government only focuses on traditional attractions.

“There are numerous ways to tackle overcrowding. For instance, the government could open up F&B in the Inner Harbour area by revitalising the many abandoned piers,” he proposed.

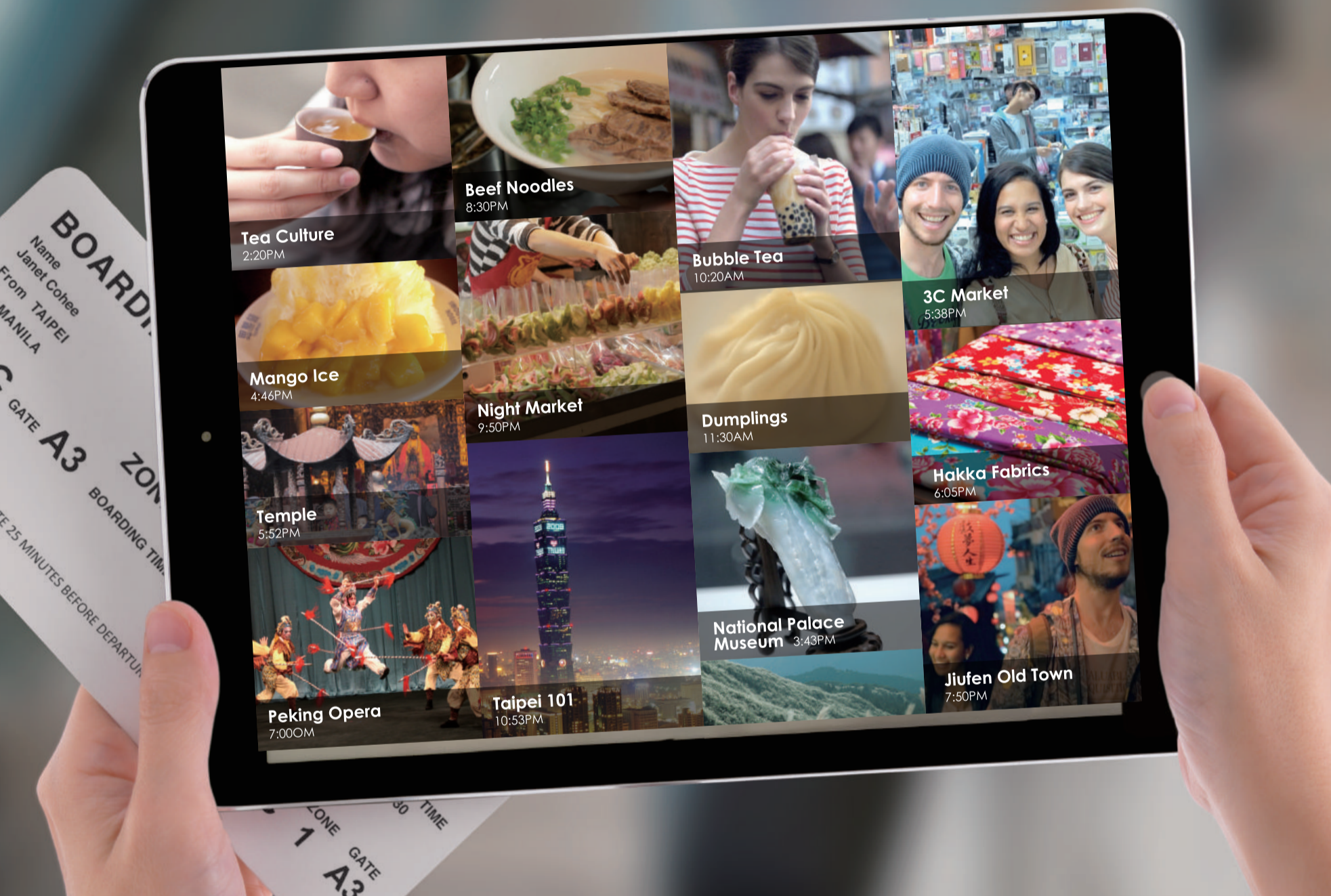
The Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) in mid-2019 conducted a feasibility study on the implementation of a tourist tax by surveying residents, visitors and travel trade members, with preliminary results showing varying opinions among the different stakeholders.

The overall report is targeted to be finalised by the end of this year, which MGTO will then submit the findings to the SAR government for further consideration and action.



Zhang: tax may deter visitors

Non-Stop Delight @ My Transit in Taiwan



I never thought my transit in Taiwan would be so utterly amazing and unforgettable. Delicate dumplings, beef noodles and bubble tea restored my appetite after a long flight. The National Palace Museum, Longshan Temple and Peking opera opened my eyes. Stunning views from Taipei 101, bustling night markets and chic bars thrilled me. My transit in Taiwan: A brief yet incredible whirlwind of non-stop delight!

Short Stay, Lasting Memories

Taiwan

THE HEART OF ASIA

Host city



Gem of a city

The worlds of new and old collide in Kazakhstan's capital city, Nur-Sultan (formerly known as Astana), where its futuristic skyline and outlandish modern architecture belies the country's nomadic past. Cheryl Ong discovers the myriad attractions it offers



SEE

1. Visit the Palace of Peace and Reconciliation

The brainchild of famed British architect Norman Foster, this pyramid-shaped palace stands tall as a 62m-high symbol of friendship, unity and peace in Kazakhstan.

Opened in late 2006, the pyramid was specially built to host the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions who meet once in three years. It also houses a 1,300-seat concert hall, two art galleries, and an archaeological museum.

2. Ogle at a giant "lollipop"

Nicknamed "Chupa Chups" by the locals, the Bayterek Tower is another Foster-helmed architectural wonder wrapped up in symbolic meaning. The height of the 97m-tall tower typifies the year 1997 when Nur-Sultan was named the nation's capital, while the white latticed tower crowned by a golden glass orb embodies the folklore about a bird of happiness who laid an egg atop the tree of life. Lifts bring you up to the tower's top where you can soak in 360-degree city views or place your hand in president Nazarbayev's gilded palm print and make a wish.

3. Study Kazakhstan's storied past

Take a stroll down Kazakhstan's storied lane at the National Museum of Kazakhstan, said to be the largest museum in Central Asia.

This 74,000m² building houses the history of art and ethnology of Central Asia

from medieval to modern times. Learn about the country's nomadic culture and gawk at Kazakh ornaments from the famed "Golden Man" (a national symbol of Kazakhstan) to a giant yurt as you amble through seven themed halls comprising interactive exhibits and rare artefacts.

DO

4. Go sight-seeing at Duman

This leisure complex is home to a 3D cinema, several F&B outlets and a slew of kid-friendly entertainment options.

Duman's biggest draw, though, is its awe-inspiring oceanarium, which boasts a vast diversity of sea fauna and marine animals, which you can see up-close in the 70m-long tunnel. Other to-dos: Eye exotic reptiles at the Exotarium, stroke a furry friend or two at the animal petting corner, or pose with world-famous symbols like the Statue of Liberty at the dome area.

5. Have a splash of a time at the domed Khan Shatyr

Opened in 2010, this 10,000m² retail and leisure complex boasts a waterpark, shopping mall and a plethora of attractions, including a flume ride and 38m-high drop tower. All these thrills and spills aplenty are housed under a 150m-tall transparent tent made of ethylene tetrafluoroethylene that bestows summery degrees indoors year-round. There's also an indoor beach resort Sky Beach Club, replete with palm trees, sand beach and a giant swimming pool, in this neo-futurist building.

6. Cosy up to nature at the Borovoe (Burabay) National Nature Park

Oft referred to as the Switzerland of Kazakhstan, this scenic nature park situated just a three-hour drive from Nur-Sultan, offers a slice of serenity with its pine forests, rolling hills and lovely lakes.

Several walking trails and hiking options are available. You can also rent a boat and glide over the lake, try horseback-riding through forest paths, or go for a dip in the untouched lakes of this mountainous oasis. In the winter months, you can enjoy ice fishing, skiing or reindeer-drawn sleigh rides.

EAT

7. Savour Kazakh's cherished national dishes

For traditional chow, hotfoot it to Turan Street, located within spitting distance from Khan Shatyr. Here, you'll find a row of restaurants serving Kazakhstan's national dish, *beshbarmak* – diced boiled horse or mutton meat served atop pasta and onions. The term *beshbarmak* means "five fingers" because the dish is traditionally eaten with one's hands. Another national favourite *kuyrdak* is a hearty stew made with the chopped heart, livers, lungs and kidneys from cows, horse or sheep. Wash it all down with *kumis*, an alcoholic beverage made with fermented mare's milk.

8. Dine at Khmelnaya Melnitsa

For a meal with a view, head to Melnitsa, which runs along Turan Street. A wind-

mill exterior beckons you into this pub-like Ukrainian restaurant which serves up a myriad of traditional Ukrainian dishes, such as *deruny* (potato pancakes), *vareniki* (filled dumplings), and chicken Kiev. As well as offering a wide range of beers and vodka, a live band plays in the evenings.

STAY

9. Live in the lap of luxury at the Rixos President Astana

Arguably Nur-Sultan's most opulent hotel, this five-star luxury gem has hosted luminaries like visiting presidents and prime ministers. Standard rooms and suites come with Jacuzzi tubs, flatscreen TVs and free Wi-Fi. The hotel has a bar, an Irish pub, two restaurants and a large Anjana spa with a gym, sauna and swimming pool. Rixos also features free international phone calls and the best conference facilities in the city.

10. Check into the Astana Marriott Hotel

This five-star, 271-room hotel, conveniently located in the bustling heart of the city, has three meeting rooms and a Grand Ballroom boasting digital services meeting planners can avail themselves of. The hotel has three F&B outlets, namely Aroma Restaurant, Lobby Bar and Vista Restaurant & Bar which offers stunning views of the city from the 27th floor. Additional hotel facilities include a business centre, free Wi-Fi and a health club with a gym, indoor pool, sauna and steam rooms.

Spotlight

Taking the first steppe

The Daily chats with PATA's CEO Mario Hardy about hosting the first-ever PATA event in Central Asia

What are the highlights of PATA Travel Mart (PTM) 2019, and how is it different from previous editions?

One of the key highlights is that this is the first time in the association's 68-year history that we are organising an event in Central Asia.

In addition, we wanted to add further value for our host for PTM and will be organising a half-day complimentary workshop for their local tourism industry stakeholders.

Themed Explore the Art of Storytelling, the workshop will be led by Rob Holmes, the founder and chief strategist of GLP Films, a content marketing agency dedicated to travel and sustainability storytelling.

The choice of Nur-Sultan as host destination for PTM is a unique one. What insights have you learned from organising the show in Central Asia this year?

We were delighted when Kazakh Tourism submitted their bid for PTM, and we are excited to bring buyers and sellers from around the globe to discover this beautiful region.

We do hope that our attendees will take the opportunity to explore Nur-Sultan as well as the rest of Kazakhstan; its rich and diverse landscape including numerous lakes, lowlands, deserts and valleys framed by mountains in the east and south-east. This is also the perfect opportunity for

our delegates to explore the other fascinating countries in the region as well.

How have your impressions of Kazakhstan changed in the past year?

I have personally visited Kazakhstan twice in recent years and every time I have discovered something new about the local nomadic culture. This time, I look forward to spending a few more days in Almaty, the cultural centre of Kazakhstan.

How has the name change of the Kazakh capital from Astana to Nur-Sultan earlier this year affected PTM 2019? How did you overcome the issues?

The capital of Kazakhstan has changed its name several times since 1997, which is something the locals have become accustomed to. For us at PATA, it was not that much of a challenge as we simply referred to the city using both names.

What message do you hope PTM 2019 attendees would take away?

The concept of having PTM organised in a different city every year is to allow our attendees the opportunity to discover new destinations and regions. Our aim is that our delegates will get to explore and discover as much as possible from this region and help promote it to their customers, family, friends and colleagues.

Where will PTM 2020 be held?

In a warmer location!

Download
PATA Events
mobile app



Download the PATA Events App on your smartphone to connect with other delegates, access event programmes and schedules, and stay updated on the latest announcements and news of the event in real-time.

To download the app, simply scan the QR code above or search for "PATA Events" in the App Store or Google Play. For instructions on how to download and access the app, please visit <https://attendify.com/app/6lplw/>



A Getaway to Paradise in

THE MARIANAS



The Marianas
| Saipan | Tinian | Rota |

✉ info@mymarianas.com ☎ +1 670 664 3200 🌐 www.mymarianas.com

Visit us at: @MyMarianas @TheMarianas

Glowing and growing

Wellness tourism is entering a robust state of growth, having ballooned into a multibillion-dollar global industry and bringing a convergence of sectors from airports to accommodation.

By Xinyi Liang-Pholsena



Wellness tourism, the pursuit of maintaining or enhancing one's personal wellbeing while on vacation, is no longer a hippy concept sought out by the spiritual or backpacker types.

It has become a US\$639 billion global market in 2017, more than double the 3.2 per cent growth rate for tourism overall, according to the *2018 Global Wellness Tourism Economy* report released by non-profit Global Wellness Institute (GWI).

This fast-growing tourism segment has been posting healthy growth, expanding by 6.5 per cent annually from 2015 to 2017. Travellers made 830 million wellness trips in 2017, which is 139 million more than in 2015. Furthermore, wellness tourism looks set to continue its rapid growth trajectory at 7.5 per cent annually through 2022 to reach US\$919 billion.

At the root of this robust growth is a confluence of factors – a burgeoning global middle class, stronger appreciation and desire for a healthy lifestyle, greater interest in experiential travel, and growing ease and affordability of flights and travel options – all of which are steamrolling the demand and development of wellness tourism worldwide.

“Once upon a time, our contact with wellness was occasional: we went to the gym or got a massage. But this is changing fast: a wellness mindset is starting to permeate the global consumer consciousness, affecting people's daily decision-making – whether food purchases, a focus on mental wellness and reducing stress, incorporating movement into daily life, environmental consciousness, or their yearning for connection and happiness,” noted Katherine Johnston, senior research fellow, GWI.

“Wellness, for more people, is evolving from rarely to daily, from episodic to essential, from a luxury to a dominant lifestyle value. And that profound shift is driving powerful growth.”

While North America leads in wellness

tourism expenditures and Europe remains the top destination for wellness trips, it is Asia-Pacific where the most gains in the number of wellness trips and expenditure has been made.

China, Japan and India reign as the top three wellness markets in Asia-Pacific in 2017, recording expenditures of US\$31.7 billion, US\$22.5 billion and US\$16.3 billion respectively.

Amid the eye-popping growth that wellness tourism is seeing, GWI also reports the convergence of wellness, hospitality and travel businesses in unprecedented ways, as businesses experiment with new partnerships and business models to help travellers incorporate wellness into every aspect of their trips.

Here's a look at key trends in Asia's wellness tourism sector and what to expect in 2019 and beyond.

Beyond skin-deep treatments

As medical tourism expands beyond cosmetic surgery procedures like facelifts and liposuction to body sculpting and facial rejuvenation, established medical hubs like Thailand are especially well-placed to capture the high-value medical and wellness tourism segments.

While many top-notch hospitals in the region have checked into hospitality – think Singapore's Farrer Park Hospital, which has an adjoining hotel for patients to recuperate – the converse is also true as more wellness resorts expand beyond traditional spa treatments and therapies into high-tech offerings.

Just look to the newly-opened Mövenpick BDMS Wellness Resort Bangkok, which is tapping world-class physicians and latest molecular science in its lifestyle and wellness destination resort proposition.

By leveraging its connection with owner Bangkok Dusit Medical Services (BDMS) – Thailand's largest private hospital group – this 293-key destination spa resort seeks to tap the clientele at next-

door BDMS Wellness Clinic, as well as the growing ranks of health-conscious travellers looking to rejuvenate their bodies and minds while on vacation.

Guestrooms are outfitted with wellness amenities like mood lighting, yoga mats and bouncing balls, while an established nutritionist has been roped in as consultant to develop healthy, GMO-free menus for F&B offerings, as well as coffee breaks for corporate events.

Mövenpick BDMS Wellness Resort Bangkok is not alone in pursuing the lucrative synergies between wellness and medical tourism.

Dedicated wellness resort pioneer Chiva-Som International Health Resort will complete a top-to-toe revamp in October this year that will see the addition of a new hydrotherapy suite and flotation chamber to its wellness facilities.

Urban push for wellness resorts

While wellness resorts were once the domain of destination spas in tranquil resort locations, the growing bleisure trend, as

well as desire of travellers to have access to self care vacations, have led to a growing number of urban hotels in Asian cities to roll out wellness programmes and positioning themselves as wellness retreats.

Aman already moved into this space in Tokyo, while Six Senses recently forayed into Singapore with two properties in the city's commercial district; both wellness hospitality brands are expected to launch in New York City come 2020. Meanwhile, One&Only is set to debut its first urban resort in Dubai's One Za'abeel.

While cosmopolitan cities may not be typically perceived as wellness retreat locations, it's the very proximity of accessibility and serenity that draw hospitality companies to set up shop in some of Asia's busiest cities.

What Singapore has is the alluring marriage of accessibility and serenity, according to Christian Gurtner, managing director of The Capitol Kempinski Hotel Singapore.

He explained: “It's clearly the best of both worlds combined in one place. While you are able to retreat from hectic daily life and get a good rest with a relaxing ambience, you are at the same time in the middle of everything and just steps away from entertainment, shopping, cultural events, bars and restaurants.”

For Fivelements, which runs an eco-wellness resort in Bali, it's with the vision of addressing the growing prevalence of mental health and physical wellbeing issues in urban centres that founders Lahra Tatriele and Chicco Tatriele brought its brand to Hong Kong.

“We see that people in Hong Kong are living highly demanding lives and are seeking greater balance, stress reduction and authentic, personalised wellness experiences. So we intend to create a home or ‘habitat’ for the growing ‘urban wellness tribe’ and cultivate it as the second most important place for urban dwellers, creating a bridge between their first, being their residence, and their third, being their workplace. We believe that urbanites are now ready for a city wellness concept,” said the founders.

The first Fivelements Habitat has just launched in Hong Kong's Times Square in July 2019, and the brand will plant two more locations in the CBD over the coming 18 months.



Above: Fivelements' plant-based cuisine

Featuring a rich collection of holistic practices inspired by Balinese healing philosophy, Tri Hita Karana, to foster self-exploration, mental and physical health and wellbeing, Fivelements Habitats in Hong Kong offer a diverse array of formats, ranging from classes to private sessions, corporate groups, trainings and workshops, events and day retreats.

Airport wellness ventures take to new heights

As the numbers of people travelling by air surges around the world, airports are no exceptions to the wellness trend as they become wellness destinations in their own right, rolling out health-minded services that are a step beyond one restaurant menu or spa, varying from swimming pools to nap pods to full-service spas.

For example, Frankfurt International Airport touts dedicated silent chairs, which enable passengers to get some peace and quiet with their arched backrests and soundproofing glass panels, alongside facilities like yoga studios and an open-air rooftop terrace.

In Doha, Hamad International Airport's dedicated Vitality Wellbeing & Fitness Center is an oasis of therapeutic services, ranging from a glass-encased indoor pool to a hydrotherapy tub and nail salon.

Fitness, beauty and relaxation brands are making a push for their services into airports, according to a CB Insights report on wellness trends for 2019. Most recently, US-based airport spa brand BeRelax has raised US\$24 million for post-security relaxation and beauty treatments, feeding into the growing trend of airports becoming more like shopping malls.

Leading fitness membership network ClassPass, which recently expanded into Asia, has entered into the travel wellness market with its launch of ClassPass Getaways to offer day-long wellness experiences such as workouts or spa services, among other options, CB Insights noted.

Clearly, airports are on their way to becoming the stepping stone to a wellness-theme travel journey.

A new fleet of floating retreats

With the significant uptick in fitness-oriented vacations increase, cruise lines are also responding by offering a gamut of wellness experiences on board, from indulgent pampering to fitness classes to oxygen bars.

In fact, total restoration has been identified by Cruise Lines International Association as one of the key cruising trends in 2019, as travellers seek ways to relieve the stress of the daily lives, and more cruise lines are responding to such growing passen-



Above: Saltwater relaxation pool at Capitol Kempinski

ger demand than ever before.

Cruise line Lindblad Expeditions joined hands with New York-based Exhale Spas to roll out its first wellness retreats at sea. Seaboard, meanwhile, has tapped the expertise of integrative medicine guru Andrew Weil in its new programme that centres on holistic, mindful living across its entire fleet. Other major cruise lines Oceania Cruises, Regent Seven Seas, Cunard and Celebrity Cruises have all partnered with Canyon

Ranch to offer health-centric activities at sea and on land.

In Asia, Dream Cruises has also teamed up with ClassPass to offer special fitness-theme cruises earlier this year. Designed for millennial travellers and fitness fanatics, the three-night cruise programme was jam-packed with a wide range of classes, from high-intensity interval training and boxing lessons to chilled-out yoga sessions and aerobic Latino jam sessions.

"We're seeing an increasing demand for holistic health and wellness options in Singapore, so fitness was an obvious choice for our first themed cruise in the Dreamer Series," said Michael Goh, senior vice president – international sales of Genting Cruise Lines in a statement.

– *Additional reporting by Pamela Chow and Tiara Maharani*



Wellness, for more people, is evolving from rarely to daily, from episodic to essential, from a luxury to a dominant lifestyle value. And that profound shift is driving powerful growth.

– Katherine Johnston, senior research fellow, Global Wellness Institute

EXPERIENCE AIRAI
Visit us at: Hall A; No. 59

culturally rich and eco-friendly

#VISITPALAU
@DavorRostuhar



kazakh tourism
NATIONAL COMPANY

PATA
Pacific Asia Travel Association

PATA TRAVEL MART 2019

SEP 18-20

KORME EXHIBITION CENTER
NUR-SULTAN (ASTANA)
KAZAKHSTAN

First time in Central Asia

OFFICIAL AIR CARRIER



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PATA is sincerely grateful to our hosts, the Ministry of Culture and Sport of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Kazakh Tourism National Company, for their enthusiastic administration and hosting of PATA Travel Mart 2019 in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan. PATA would like to sincerely thank them and the people of Kazakhstan for their warm hospitality and kind generosity.

Generously hosted by



kazakh tourism
NATIONAL COMPANY

Official Carrier



Official Publication



PTM 2019 Coffee Break Sponsor



Delegate Lanyard Sponsor



Mobile Application Sponsor



Official Contractor and Sales Agent



Sponsors



Gold Awards Dinner and Award Presentation Sponsor



澳門特別行政區政府旅遊局
DIRECÇÃO DOS SERVIÇOS DE TURISMO
MACAO GOVERNMENT TOURISM OFFICE

PTM Forum Partners



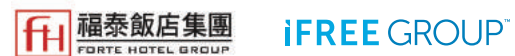
PTM Forum Coffee Break Sponsors



Supporting Media Partners



PATA YTP Student Sponsors



Official Hotels



Destination Macau

A balancing act

Although overcrowding at popular tourist sites is not yet causing major problems for some tourism players, the Macanese trade thinks it's not too early to start dispersing traffic to lesser visited areas in the city, **Prudence Lui** writes



The Ruins of St Paul's, one of the most popular sites in Macau, sees many visitors each day

Macau is showing early signs of capacity strains after recent accessibility enhancements in the Pearl River Delta like the high-speed rail connection and the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge.

During the recent May 1 Labour Day Holiday, visitor arrivals surged 37 per cent to 636,644, almost equivalent to the city's total population (667,400).

With visitors concentrated in some key attractions, industry players say more can be done to disperse traffic. Based on findings from several visitor profile studies conducted by the Macao Government

Tourism Office (MGTO) in the past five years, the top three attractions for the visitors are the Ruins of St Paul's, Senado Square and Cotai Strip. Taipa and Coloane Village have also experienced visitor surges during peak periods.

China Travel Service (Macao), travel department sales and marketing manager, Pun Cheng-man, said: "We feel the (effects of) overtourism especially during weekends and public holidays. Cotai and Taipa are key sightseeing points, and both are always packed with tourists."

Pun said the uneven distribution of tourists has caused "nuisances to neigh-

bourhood and local residents".

Charles Huang, COO of Macao Hotel Sun Sun, located within Inner Harbour, opined: "Overtourism is a result of government's focus on promoting traditional attractions only."

Huang suggested that unused piers in Inner Harbour can be transformed into tourist-friendly F&B zones. He also hopes for Inner Harbour to be added as a stop for eventgoers during festivals such as Chinese New Year.

Visitor traffic can also be managed by holding tourist activities outside of peak periods. "For instance, the annual Macao

International Fireworks Display Contest takes place on busy weekends. Why not do it Friday? This can also entice visitors to stay one more night. It'd better if the event can be held in first half of the year," Huang proposed.

In Taipa Village, some tourism players don't believe crowding is a problem yet. Taipa Village Destination, head of marketing Pamela Chan, said: "Since there is a growing number of attractions in Macau, visitors are being distributed to different areas."

She added that Taipa Village can afford to continue welcoming more visitors. "I can see the footfall traffic diversification all around Macau, between Cotai, Taipa and the Macau Peninsula."

A restaurateur who sees tourist business peak in the month of May, too said that visitor traffic is adequately spread out between his Taipa and Macau Peninsula outlets.

"We did see a slight bump in visitors as compared to last year. However, traffic was divided in both areas. Cotai caters to more upmarket tourists and Macau has more options for budget hotels."

Similar to Chan, he feels he is ready to welcome even more business.

Still, the strong growth in arrivals is already prompting the MGTO and relevant bodies to implement measures to alleviate crowds. For instance, a new app was launched in March 2019 to help residents and visitors better monitor traffic to avoid crowds. The application predicts visitor density at tourist attractions within four hours, 24 hours and seven days, and classifies the forecast at various levels from "comfortable" to "heavily congested".

The MGTO spokesman said: "Another focus has been on attracting visitors to different parts of the city, during different times of the year, with projects like the Step Out, Experience Macao's Communities walking tours, along with events like the Art Macao (which inaugurated on June 6), as well as new attractions such as Anim'Arte Nam Van and the Grand Prix Museum."

Meanwhile, there are pipeline projects for urban planning in and around the Ruins of St Paul's and Barra. The Transport Bureau has also continually improved traffic control measures, and the Light Rail Transit (Taipa Line) System is expected to be operational in 2019.

Moreover, MGTO hopes to complete feasibility studies within this year, before submitting its findings to the government for further analysis and consideration.

What's hot

City of Dreams backstage tour

City of Dreams is giving visitors backstage access to its signature House of Dancing Water show. The hour-long guided Explorer Tour will give theatre enthusiasts an insider look at stage operations, machinery, diving and elaborate costumes.

Visitors may also opt for the 45-minute Experience Tour, which takes visitors on stage to experience the thrill of being part of a world-renowned show and a chance to meet the performers.

Largo da Sé food tour

Klook's three-hour Macanese food crawl around Largo da Sé (Cathedral Square) will introduce participants to five popular savoury dishes. There is also the chance



From left: Boss Party Nightlife Tour, City of Dreams backstage tour

to sample local eats at seasonal food stalls. Tours are available in English, Chinese or Cantonese, for groups of four to six pax.

Studio City's new attractions

Studio City will launch two new entertainment attractions once it obtains the required licences.

The Flip-Out is Macau's first indoor trampoline centre, run by an operator with 78 arenas worldwide. Meanwhile, the Legend Heroes Park will use VR, AR, hologram, motion tracking, projection mapping, 4D+ technologies, alongside video arcade games and 'sportainment'.



Boss Party Nightlife Tour

Party like a boss on this Klook tour, which ferries you from one nightclub to another in a van or stretch limo, and fast-tracks you to the front of the line. Available on Fridays and Saturdays, the tour is coordinated by hostesses and includes some drinks and pick-up service.

Destination Myanmar

Glimmer of hope for recovery

Following dismal performance from the western markets in recent years, Myanmar's tourism sector is starting to see slow but positive signs of recovery from key European countries, **Marissa Carruthers** writes

Myanmar's tourism industry is hopeful that after a tough few years, the industry is starting to show signs of recovery, with visitor growth from the western markets.

Hla Aye, Shan Yoma Travel & Tours managing director, said: "The tourism industry in Myanmar has been in a very bad situation until now."

He added the boycott of the country by western countries coupled with rising inflation rates throughout 2018 – when the Burmese kyat rose from 1,300 to more than 1,600 against US\$1 – has hurt small local operators, leaving many teetering on the brink of survival.

Said Hla Aye, also vice-chairman of the Union of Myanmar Travel Association: "There have been many local tourism businesses who have found it very difficult to survive in that climate."

However, he said 2019 has shown more positive signs as Asian arrivals continue to grow, leading to new opportunities, with many grassroots operators shifting their focus towards regional visitors. He also added that interest from longhaul destinations is starting to spring back.

According to the latest figures from the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, the number of foreign tourists visiting Myanmar rose 13 per cent in the first quarter of 2019, as compared to last year.

Visitors from China rose 74 per cent to top the list of foreign tourists to Myanmar, followed by Japanese, South Koreans, Malaysians and Indians. However, tourists from Europe and North America dipped



The travel boycott of Myanmar has hurt local tourism operators in the country (pictured: Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon)

two per cent.

Melissa Tan, Khiri Myanmar general manager, noted a rise in enquiries from Europe, saying that the company saw a 50 per cent increase in December. However, she noted 2018 was a "really bad" year.

Added Tan: "I'm excited because these are solid FIT enquiries, which shows that interest is returning. Most of the inquiries are from the Netherlands and the UK. The

UK is a strong sign because they were the first to drop us entirely."

Positive media coverage, such as the release of the two Burmese Reuters journalists, are also helping to spur recovery. Said Tan: "People are starting to realise it's not, and never has been, a safety issue."

European countries that have shown strong signs of recovery are Spain and Italy, which posted a 13 per cent and 26 per

cent year-on-year increase respectively in 1Q. Phyo Wai Yar Zar, Diethelm Travel Myanmar managing director, said interest from Italy is spurred by the launch of Neos Air's flight from Milan to Yangon in October.

He added the German and Swiss markets have also shown a positive trend of bookings for the 2019/2020 high season "due to the contributions of hotel rates in packaged tour prices".

Despite this, Bertie Lawson, Sampan Travel managing director, remains cautious. He said: "I think it is too early to tell. There seems to be an emergence of cautious optimism in the industry. However, I still believe any recovery of arrivals from the west will be gradual."

Sampan Travel recently launched a series of mini-tours geared towards expats and regional tourists looking for short getaways. This is a move that, in the wake of the western downturn, has been adopted by many operators hoping to capture a slice of the growing Asian market.

Other efforts to claw back longhaul visitors include Myanmar Tourism Marketing (MTM)'s launch of its 9 Enchanting Discoveries of Myanmar at ITB Berlin, which highlights lesser-visited destinations. MTM has teamed up with hotels, airlines and tour operators to run a Green Season promotion from May to October.

The government also announced that from October 1, it will offer visa on arrival to visitors from Italy, Spain, Russia, Germany, Switzerland and Australia. Industry players, however, have said this alone is not enough to spur huge growth.

"2017 to 2018 was really bad. This year, we are seeing signs of recovery and we believe the structure is in place for next year," said Tan. "We are already starting to see hotels hiking their rates up a little bit for the 2020 high season, so that shows they are expecting growth."

What's hot

Taking the road from Mandalay

Khiri Travel's refreshing road trip from Mandalay to Bagan offers visitors a unique chance to explore a swathe of alternative ancient sites, discover local life in the small communities dotting the route and learn about innovative conservation efforts along the way. During the journey, stops are made at temples, villages and a forgotten pottery town. Guests also get to cruise down the Irrawaddy River and meet endemic tortoises.

WWII tour digs into history

Sampan Travel's 19-day Burma WWII Tour offers an in-depth insight into the Second World War in Burma, often described as the Forgotten War. It passes through modern-day Myanmar, drawing from the stories of those who were part of the war. The journey through the battlefields goes from Yangon to Mawlamyine and Thanbyazayat, the location of the Burma-Siam Death Railway Western Terminus. Guests then return to Yangon and continue to Mandalay, Pyin Oo Lwin, Myitkyina, Katha and Bagan, finishing in Yangon.



Above: Balloons over Bagan now offers hot air balloon experiences in Loikaw

Learn diving in Mergui Archipelago

Awei Pila resort has opened a scuba diving centre in the Mergui Archipelago, offering Open Water courses and certification to first-time divers. The Awei Pila Dive Center provides all levels of PADI diving courses conducted in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, German and Italian. Once certified, guests can join experienced divers at 12 dive sites - with depths ranging from 12 to 30m - including Shark Cave and Rocky Island that are fast gaining a reputation as world-famous dive sites.

Balloons over Loikaw

Balloons Over Bagan now operates a new flight in Loikaw, Kayah State. Year-round, the Loikaw option takes off daily at sunrise, carrying groups of six to eight passengers. The journey lasts for two hours and balloons hit heights of up to 3,000m. Private charters for groups of up to eight can also be arranged. Loikaw, a remote outpost in eastern Myanmar, is home to the long-neck ladies of Kayah State.

Destination **India**

Making bigger strides

Kerala is rebounding from a major flood in 2018, but the promotional momentum gained during its tourism recovery campaign is not about to slow. By **Rohit Kaul**



Dmitry Rudchenko/shutterstock

Exploring the backwaters on a traditional thatched houseboat is said to be a quintessential Kerala experience

The severe flooding that ravaged Kerala in August 2018 might have washed out the tourism sector in its immediate wake, but the keen sense of collaboration and optimism from the state's travel and hospitality players are buoying recovery progress.

Key among the promotional efforts the local trade undertook was the Kerala Travel Mart, which took place in September, not long after the devastating floods.

E M Najeeb, chairman of Airtravel Enterprises, said: "Tourism and hospitality players (in Kerala) came together and showcased their products in the event.

More than 600 overseas buyers and 1,100 domestic buyers attended the mart. The *We Are Ready* campaign was also projected by the industry and the government on media platforms."

Najeeb – who is also senior vice president of the Indian Association of Tour Operators – added that it was a message of readiness shown among tour operators and hoteliers at the mart, as they sought to convince overseas buyers and partners to continue selling Kerala to their clients.

Going ahead with the Kerala Travel Mart was also deemed a good move by Dipak Deva, managing director of Sita –

the inbound arm of Thomas Cook India – as it gave a "positive sign to foreign tour operators" that it was business as usual in the state.

The DMC "did not receive a single cancellation from the Kerala floods", suggesting the "confidence" clients had of the state as well as in the company, said Deva.

"The best way forward would be for the entire industry to come together and send a positive message about Kerala being an important tourism destination of India, and encourage travellers to take a holiday to Kerala, thereby contributing to its re-

covery," he opined.

Meanwhile, Thomas Cook India has lent its support to Kerala's tourism players during the crisis period by pre-paying, as well as making deposits to its ground suppliers and vendors. The company also undertook the pre-purchasing of inventory for its 4Q winter bookings way in advance, as early as September 2018.

With recovery now underway in the state, the tourism authorities are also keen to brandish an image of normality for Kerala.

P Bala Kiran, director, Kerala Tourism shared: "We have restored the connectivity, infrastructure and tourism experience... All the major tourism destinations – Kochi, Munnar, Thekkady, Athirapally, Wayanad, Alappuzha, Kumarakom, Varkala, Trivandrum, Kovalam and Poovar – are back to normal and receiving guests."

Hospitality players in the state have also reported an uptick in business, a result of active efforts to rebuild tourism to Kerala from both the government and private sector players.

"We have many Germans and Russians clients coming in for Ayurveda (packages) and staying a minimum of 14 days," shared Raja Gopaal Iyer, CEO, UDS Group of Hotels.

The continued arrivals of these foreign tourists in turn helped to spread the word that Kerala is fine to visit, Iyer pointed out, as the hotel group also shared guests' testimonials on social media platforms.

Iyer added: "We are seeing a lot of foreign tour operators coming to Kerala for finalisation of the properties that they are working on. We are also working with tour operators to come up with competitive packages for international markets."

While Najeeb foresees "natural calamities like floods have only a short-term impact on tourism" for Kerala, an effective international promotional campaign could be a much stronger strategy to improve Kerala's branding on the global stage.

The Kerala Department of Tourism is far from idle though, as it is slated to participate in 12 international tradeshows beginning with Saudi Arabia and Bahrain in October 2018 to aggressively promote the destination on the global stage.

What's hot

Darjeeling to Sikkim

This tour by India Untravelled takes you deep into north-eastern Himalayas to a small and remote tea farming village near Darjeeling, and then on foot through breathtaking landscapes to the lost kingdom of Sikkim, the last state to be annexed by India in 1975. On this journey, experience plucking, rolling and sipping organic teas on a family-run mountain farm. Guests hike undulating hills covered by tea plantations, surrounded by majestic mountains, through charming villages, and finally across the Rangeet River to Sikkim.

Vineyard tours in Maharashtra

The 97ha Fratelli Vineyards in the Solapur region of Maharashtra is India's largest privately owned wine estate. The company

has introduced a host of vineyard tours on top of the opportunity to enjoy regional cuisine and stay in a guest house on the vineyard. Guests can choose from a day tour up to a two-night stay.

Snow leopard spotting

Spiti United organises a winter expedition to

spot snow leopards in the wild, with a base camp in Kibber. Winter adventurers will put up at Spiti's own homestay facility, the Red Fox, in Kibber.

Women-only retreats

Byond Travel organises women-only biking and adventure trips year-round. For ex-

ample, Escape to Pushkar is a five-day programme led by a celebrity nutritionist and fitness expert, and includes group exercises, fitness classes, yoga classes and meal planning sessions.

A new Statue of Unity

Located in the Narmada district of Gujarat, the recently unveiled Statue of Unity is said to be the world's tallest statue at 182m. While this in itself is a spectacle, the surrounding Narmada river, against the backdrop of Satpura and Vindhya Ranges, is also a sight to behold.

Gujarat tourism has opened online bookings for not just entry to the statue site but also for tourism packages that include tented accommodation and other local attractions such as the Shoolpaneshwar Temple and Rajvnt Palace.



Above: Tea picking in Darjeeling

Destination Malaysia

Natural appreciation

Selangor state has emerged as an up-and-coming destination that can offer what travellers increasingly crave for nowadays – a large dose of traditional local culture coupled with unique rural experiences, discovers [S Puvaneswary](#)

What's hot

Meet with Orang Asli

This Diethelm Travel Malaysia tour offers visitors a glimpse into the lives of the local aboriginal people in Gombak, Selangor. Travellers will be able to try their hand at weaving bags and baskets with the local women, building a shelter in the jungle using leaves, starting a fire with wood and cooking a meal in a traditional way, joining a blowpipe competition, among other activities.

Paddle through a national park

Dev's Adventure Tours offers a kayaking adventure at Kilim Geoforest Park in Langkawi. A naturalist will lead the expedition through smaller river channels, with snack breaks in between and a stop at Eagle Point to observe eagles in their natural habitat.

A jaunt by the countryside

This three-hour Selangor tour by Ping Anchorage takes visitors to the Royal Selangor Visitor Centre, where they can see craftsmen at work with pewter and try their hand at designing a pewter bowl. This is followed by a visit to a batik centre before proceeding to Batu Caves, where visitors have to climb 272 steps to reach a temple.

Sabah jungle expedition

Spotlighting Sabah's rich natural beauty, this 3D2N Sukau Wildlife Adventure by Big Blue Holidays includes a river cruise on the Kinabatangan River – which teems with indigenous species such as the Proboscis monkey, Bornean orangutan and Borneo pygmy elephant – and a visit to the Goman-tong Caves, renowned for its edible swiftlet nests.

A romance in the wilderness

Ecogreen Holidays offers a five-day ecotourism experience in Selaan-Linau, Ulu Baram, in northern Sarawak. Tour highlights include meeting with the Penan and the Kenyah ethnic groups, and trekking to the Sela'an Linau waterfall surrounded by dense dipterocarp forest. Guests depart for Ulu Baram area from Miri, the main gateway to Sarawak's northern region. This tour takes a maximum of eight in a group.



Sekinchan, a major rice producing town near Kuala Lumpur, attracts visitors looking to experience a slower pace of life

Selangor's countryside charm is fast winning the favour of tourists, with growing demand for nature and local experiences stemming from the region and beyond.

Adam Kamal, general manager, Tour East Malaysia, said: "Asians and regional markets used to be attracted to big cities in Malaysia for its shopping, entertainment and cosmopolitan ambience. But these days, there is more demand for authentic local experiences, and these draws can be found outside of major cities.

"Repeat visitors especially wish to see new attractions other than Selangor's traditional draws such as Sunway Lagoon theme park and Batu Caves. They also want to enrich their holiday experience by meeting with locals," he added.

Manfred Kurz, managing director, Diethelm Travel Malaysia, agreed: "The attractiveness of Selangor countryside – be it Kuala Selangor, Sepang, Gombak, Sabak Bernam, Hulu Langat and Ulu Selangor – is its easy accessibility, a 1.5-hour drive from the nation's capital.

"Selangor is also rich in ecotourism, culture and historical places that make it ideal for day tours," he added.

One such tour that Diethelm runs is a day trip to Bukit Melawati, a 300-year-old historic site filled with local lore. The visit is followed by a seafood dinner in a local restaurant, as well as a night boat ride to watch fireflies in Kampung Kuantan. The

company also works closely with local communities and runs homestay programmes in Gombak and Sepang, as well as overnight cycling tours where guests get to stay in local properties.

"We find that even middle-aged Europeans are willing to spend a night or two at homestays, as they are keen to experience local living and participate in activities such as learning to cook local dishes or learning how to weave baskets and mats," Kurz elaborated.

Arokia Das, director of Luxury Tours Malaysia, agreed: "Visiting the Selangor countryside used to be sold as an optional add-on for tour packages (centred on) Kuala Lumpur. Thanks to increased demand for unique experiences, it is now part of packages (being sold to) Indians, Europeans and Filipinos."

For Arokia, his company works with local fishermen, farmers and plantations to create experiences for travellers such as collecting bamboo clams and cooking them the local style, learning about the process of tapping rubber trees, or harvesting paddy fields.

Kamal attributed the growing interest in Selangor's countryside tours to "the efforts of Tourism Selangor, to promote new products and attractions such as Sky Mirror at Kuala Selangor Beach, and agrotourism in Sekinchan."

Rural tourism is indeed gaining popularity with Malaysia's traditional inbound

markets such as China, Japan and regional countries, shared Tourism Selangor general manager, Noorul Ashikin Mohd Din.

"From this year onwards, we will also be promoting Selangor and rural tourism to emerging markets such as Taiwan, Japan, Hong Kong and Europe through our marketing representatives," she said.

As part of its efforts to promote rural tourism, Tourism Selangor has trained local communities in Sabak Bernam and Kuala Selangor to be local guides in the areas they live. This year, the training will continue in Ulu Langat, Gombak, Hulu Selangor and Kuala Langat. This Community Host Programme is endorsed by the Selangor State government. So far, 21 have already undergone training and are active guides.

Noorul said the pilot project was initiated to create community experts who are knowledgeable in their area's lore and history, culture, heritage and food, which they can share with tourists.

She added that this project will assist rural communities by allowing them to earn extra income through guiding, and the sales of local crafts.

As part of efforts to help market the services of community guides, Tourism Selangor has produced culture maps of Klang, Kuala Selangor and Sabak Bernam respectively which includes a list of places to eat, things to do, historical sites, as well as contact information for local guides and inbound agents.



Kayaking among mangroves in Kilim Karst Geoforest Park, Langkawi



ONE MORE REASON
TO SAY THANK YOU

BEST AIRLINE IN CENTRAL ASIA AND INDIA 2019



Marketplace



Never-ending fun in the Philippines

At PATA Travel Mart 2019, the Philippines will showcase three destinations that cater to a wide range of tourists, including both business and leisure travellers. Cebu, with captivating beaches and state-of-the-art MICE facilities; Bicol, home to the perfect cone-shaped volcano and everything spicy; and Palawan, the country's last frontier, internationally renowned for its islands and underwater wonders, as well as the world's longest navigable underwater river, the Puerto Princesa Underground River.

Regardless of choice, the Philippines is geared to impress and inspire with an array of world-class tourism products and services across its 7,000 islands.

Find out why it's More Fun in the Philippines at booth no. B41, Hall B.

Stay in Bandung with Jayakarta

Perched above the highland city of Bandung, capital of Indonesia's West Java province, The Jayakarta Suites Bandung gives a sweeping view of the entire city and surrounding mountains. The property offers well-appointed modern facilities with 210 rooms in various categories, including a Penthouse and Boutique Suites with private balcony.

Families can enjoy the hotel's sport and recreation facilities such as the rooftop tennis court, lagoon swimming pool with whirlpool, children's playground and children's pool. Situated just 10 minutes away from the property in central Bandung are numerous factory outlet shops and local food to be had.

Dive into the magic of The Marianas

The US Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands is officially comprised of Saipan, Tinian, Rota and the Northern Islands. In parts of Micronesia in the western Pacific, the official languages are English and indigenous Chamorro and Carolinian. Korean, Chinese, Filipino and Japanese are commonly spoken second languages.

Saipan is the largest and most populated island in the archipelago. White sandy beaches, a turquoise lagoon, and coral reefs run the length of Saipan's western shore. International resorts, a five-star casino,

outstanding restaurants and luxury offerings offer visitors an eclectic selection of entertainment and accommodation.

Tinian is home to the House of Taga, a landmark on the US National Register of Historic Places. It boasts the largest standing latte stones in The Marianas, limestone monoliths once used as support pillars for ancient Chamorro structures.

Travellers visiting Rota can head to attractions like the ancient Mochong village site, Rota Cave Museum, Mount Tapingot and Chenchon Seabird Sanctuary.



FlyArystan climbs to greater heights

FlyArystan, which is wholly-owned by Air Astana, is Kazakhstan's first and only low-cost airline (LCC). In the four operational months since its introduction in early May, passenger load factor for the Almaty-based LCC has averaged more than 94 per cent, with on-time performance equally impressive at a level of more than 93 per cent.

FlyArystan currently operates to seven domestic destinations, but that is expected to rise sharply in 2020 accordingly with the planned increase in operational fleet. There are also plans to commence shorthaul international services in the future. The LCC will operate from multiple bases across Kazakhstan, and recently announced its first regional aircraft base in Karaganda.

The LCC started operations with two A320 aircraft, with plans for the fleet to double to four A320 aircraft by the end of 2019, and to increase the fleet to 10 by the end of 2020. By 2022, FlyArystan plans to have at least 15 aircraft in the fleet. Planes are equipped with 180 blue leather Recaro slimline seats with a seat pitch of 29 inches, and offers a FlyArystan café onboard its flights, where prices complement its low airfares.



Malaysia's Desaru Coast shapes up

Desaru Coast is a new integrated destination resort in Johor, Malaysia, with a portfolio of globally renowned hotels and resorts: Hard Rock Hotel Desaru Coast, The Westin Desaru Coast Resort, Anantara Desaru Coast Resort & Villas as well as One&Only Desaru Coast. The destination is also home to one of the world's biggest waterparks, Adventure Waterpark; Desaru Coast Conference Centre, a fully-equipped conference facility; The Els Club Desaru Coast boasting 45 holes of golf in total with two distinct courses, Ocean Course and Valley Course; and the Desaru Coast Riverside, a 9.3ha waterfront landscaped retail and lifestyle village. Spanning over 1,570ha along a pristine 17km beachfront, the destination is perfect for both leisure and business travellers.

Beep, here comes Avis' one-stop portal

ABGbeep (beep) is Avis Budget Group's one-stop portal for travel trade professionals to learn more about Avis and Budget Car Rental, with the added benefit of all bookings made through the platform being commissionable.

First launched in English at PATA Travel Mart 2018, it is now available in five Asian languages – simplified Chinese, traditional Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Thai – to cater to a growing network of travel trade partners from China, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Thailand.

Beep features premium Avis products from 5,750 locations in approximately 170



countries, while the Budget platform carries great-value vehicles from about 3,500 locations in more than 120 countries.

Sign up on www.abgbeep.com/asia.



Amble through Taiwan's small towns

In line with UNWTO's sustainable development goals, Taiwan Tourism Bureau has declared 2019 the Year of Small Town Roaming, as it seeks to actively promote its 368 towns, villages and districts to tourists all over the world.

The bureau has selected 30 classic towns to feature this year, with each town boasting its own unique characteristics. For example, in northern Taiwan, Toucheng in Yilan County is the only land, sea and air 3D tourism town in the country; while Ruifang district in New Taipei City enables visitors to discover the secrets of mines in Shuindong, Jinguashi and Jiufen.

In south-central Taiwan, the town of Yuanli in Miaoli County showcases bulrush weaving; Jiji of Nantou County features slow-paced travel by railway and the Green Tunnel; Meishan in Chiayi County promises to delight visitors with its tea gardens and tea ceremonies, while the unusual Beehive Rocket Festival is celebrated each year in Tainan City's Yanshui district.

In eastern Taiwan, Ruisui Township in Hualien County is a great place to soak in hot spring pools, while Lieyu Township in Kinmen County will take travellers on a historical journey to a time of war between Taiwan and mainland China.





DESARU COAST

JOHOR, MALAYSIA

ONE PLACE
ENDLESS ESCAPE

ENDLESS BEGINS HERE



Scan here
for more info.

Every great experience, adventure or
moment has an unforgettable beginning.
Book your holiday now at desarucoast.com



Desaru Coast Malaysia



VISIT US AT THE
PATA 2019
BOOTH NUMBER
B41

"AWESOME"

📍 Mayon Volcano, Albay

📷 Erwin Lim

Be Part of the Fun.

Overlooking the Albay Bay, Mayon Volcano attracts thousands of local and international tourists despite being the Philippines' most active volcano. Straddling three cities and five municipalities, the famous landmark of Bicol can be seen from every vantage point.

Whether in its calm and serene state or in its overwhelming display of strength, Mount Mayon will leave you in awe and appreciative of nature.

Revel in the grandiosity of Mayon Volcano's gentle slopes and discover why it's truly more fun in the Philippines.

Follow us for news and updates: tpb.gov.ph | [f](#) [i](#) [t](#) @tpbphl
#tpbgovph #itsmorefuninthephilippines

 IT'S MORE FUN IN THE
PHILIPPINES