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THE OFFICIAL
**Show
Daily**



Issue

4



ATF 2020
January 16, 2020
Bandar Seri
Begawan, Brunei

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Get Closer to Magnificent History



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Borobudur - Central java

9 Quirky Ideas to Put Your Rural Borobudur Trip a Notch Above

Do you know what awaits you at the tourism villages around Borobudur? A warm welcome, a relaxing atmosphere, and an authentic insight into the local culture. Arrive at the Adisucipto International Airport and take a bus or hire a car to reach Borobudur, Jogja. The Borobudur Temple is a major tourist attraction, but the tourism villages around Borobudur have a charm and beauty of their own.

Go Sightseeing in A Vintage Car

Love classic cars? Take an exciting tour of the Borobudur villages in a VW Cabriolet and have a memorable countryside sightseeing experience.



Participate in A Traditional Dance Performance

Jathilan, kubro siswo, gambyong, and dayakan are some of the traditional dances performed in the villages around Borobudur. Observe the dynamic movements and join the dancers who will help you get around with the dance steps. Adventure seekers can enjoy the thrills of white-water rafting in the Elo and Progo rivers and be awed by the beautiful scenery while crossing the challenging river rapids. History buffs can chill at the archaeological Karmawibhanga Museum and the maritime Samudraraksa Museum. So carve out an extraordinary experience on your tour around the quaint Borobudur villages and engage in a variety of activities to enjoy the unique flavors of the local culture. (HR)



Cook Some Mendoan

Cook your way to the local life; make some Mendoan, thin battered tempeh that's fried in very hot oil. Get connected to the locals as they teach you how to make this traditional savory snack.

Play The Gamelan

Feel the music on your trip to the villages around Borobudur. Take some music lessons from the local gamelan artists and have fun practicing a tune or two on this traditional instrumental ensemble.



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Don't miss the vibes of major festivals near Borobudur !!



L. MALI...
 ...

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Make Your Own Batik
 Designated as a Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2009, the Indonesian Batik is a traditional textile originating from Java. Batik is an intricate art form where a wax-resistant dye is used to produce patterns on a cloth. Learn batik-making from the locals and create your own masterpiece.



Drink Jamu and Sip on Local Borobudur Coffee
 Replenish yourself; try some Jamu, a traditional herbal drink made with natural ingredients. This drink has been around for ages and is used by the locals to cure ailments and boost general health. Coffee lovers can sip on some freshly-brewed local coffee while enjoying the calm village atmosphere.



Ride An Ontel
 Prefer cycling around on your rural Borobudur trip? Ride an Ontel, a unique vintage bike that has been a transportation icon in Yogyakarta since the '70s. Paddle across the villages, observe the life of rural communities and admire the natural scenery.



Have A Go at Earthenware Pottery
 Unleash your crafty side and make some pottery. Learn traditional techniques from the skillful craftsmen of the Borobudur tourism villages who make beautiful housewares and ornaments from clay.



Learn from The Local Farmers
 The inhabitants of the villages around Borobudur are mainly farmers and can be seen working hard in the rice fields and agriculture farms. The friendly farmers allow you to watch and even work alongside them, giving you the chance to learn a few things about farming.



Kota Lama Festival
 Kota Lama, Semarang - Central Java
 17-20th September 2020



Jogja International Heritage Walk
 Candi Prambanan Village, Yogyakarta
 14-15th November 2020



Borobudur Marathon
 Borobudur Temple, Magelang, Central Java
 15th November 2020



Ngayogjazz
 Sleman - Yogyakarta
 21st November 2020




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Swing High

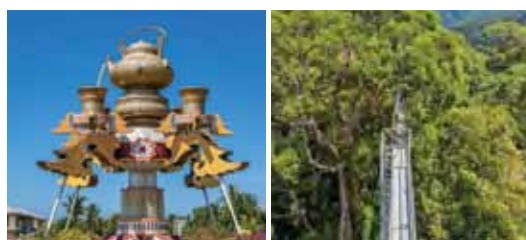
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 Badung - Bali



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New European markets shine bright

Unique offerings and warm locals here are fuelling the growing demand

By Pamela Chow

New source markets in eastern and central Europe are glowing for South-east Asia, just as destinations in the region face falling numbers from traditional European markets like Germany and the UK, reported travel agents at ATF 2020.

VietUnique Travel and Myanmar-based Nature Dream Travels & Tours told the *TTG Show Daily* that numbers from Russia and Greece are strong, with these groups preferring to visit three or four countries in a single trip.

Filiz Koçer, owner of Turkish agency Karmitur, explained that the region holds many new and different sights for Turkish travellers that cannot be found elsewhere. "Flights to Asia take a long time, so when my clients come, they will chain destinations like Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Singapore," she shared.

Amsterdam-based Asfalea Travel has

also been sending Dutch travellers to "every part of South-east Asia, especially the ASEAN countries", said its director SH Oei.

He added: "We have special ties with Indonesia, where we've been sending many travellers from the Netherlands. We get all kinds of travellers, from young customers to retirees with pension, and they could go for something more relaxing like Lake Toba, or more adventurous like the jungles of Bukit Bintang. The Komodo dragons are very popular now, but with the recent closure of Komodo Island, we're selling more tours to the Lingga Islands and Flores."

Also undeterred by the long journey are the Spaniards, who "love Asia" for its welcoming locals and unique food, said Jaime Monfort, operations manager of Spain-based Bidtravel. Top destinations like Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia

"already sell themselves", he said, adding that other South-east Asian destinations such as Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei need to step up their promotional push.

Another area of concern in travelling to Asia is the tourist infrastructure and accessibility, commented the agents. Many "new" destinations spotlighted by NTOs still require significant developments and enhancements in order to become viable for tourism, observed Oei.

Moreover, with more European markets coming into Asia, the need for interpreters and language-proficient guides becomes increasingly paramount, noted Monfort. "It would be good for these destinations to look at their logistics, especially to consider Spanish-speaking guides. It's easy to find guides who can speak English, French, or even Russian, but it is almost impossible to find one who can guide in Spanish," he said.



TTG's lensmen are on the prowl for great photos. See this photo and more at our online gallery by scanning the code above.

TTG backs South-east Asia promotion with new products

By Karen Yue

Looking to support ASEAN Tourism Marketing Working Group's desire to establish a better understanding of South-east Asia's tourism potential in the global marketplace, TTG Asia Media has launched Southeast-Asia.COM, a website that provides extensive information on travel products around the region.

Content is built around five popular travel themes – Adventure, Culture, Eat, Family, Shop – with more than 5,800 travel products available for purchase via TTG's bookasean.com booking engine.

On top of this, a white label solution has been put out for travel agents to adopt, with 10 expressions of interest since October 2019.

Soon to come in 1H2020, according to Darren Ng, managing director of TTG Asia Media, are a series of paid experiential trails in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Manila that utilise Augmented Reality and audio recordings to enhance the sights travellers will see. Downloadable through Southeast-Asia.COM, the trails come with attractive vouchers and discounts at participating dining and retail outlets.

Debuting soon as well is the Experience Pass which offers bundled prices for attraction entrance tickets. Travellers will be issued a unique barcode for ease of use.

Southeast-Asia.COM is endorsed by ASEAN Tourism Marketing Working Group of the 10 ASEAN NTOs.



ROYAL SUPPORT FOR ATF 2020

His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah ibni Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister in the Prime Minister's Office (seventh from left) of Brunei Darussalam leads the opening gala of ATF 2020 on Tuesday evening, symbolising a nod to the event's critical contribution to regional tourism development.

Photo by Yingyong Unanongrak

New website to replace ASEAN Tourism.Travel

By S Puvaneswary

Visitseasia.travel, launched at the opening ceremony of ATF 2020 on Tuesday evening, will soon replace the current ASEAN-Tourism.Travel website as the vehicle for raising the awareness of South-east Asian

tourism and the diversity of the region's products.

Speaking at a press conference yesterday afternoon, Suvimol Thanarakij, ASEAN Tourism Marketing Coordinator, explained that the new Visitseasia.travel sports a modern look and is more user-friendly than the current site.

The website serves as an information platform, capturing various travel experiences and products across categories such as Adventure & Sports, Beaches & Islands, Cruise, Nightlife and Entertainment.

It also provides useful traveller tips for each of the 10 ASEAN member countries, such as habits and traditions, safety advice, and visa requirements and recommended vaccinations.

While it does not sell tour packages now, Suvimol did not discount the idea that this might be offered in future updates of the website.

She said the website was needed, as "a brand audit study revealed that ASEAN is seen more as a political entity rather than a region that is welcoming to travellers".



Suvimol: changing things up

Temburong Bridge inspires new tourism investments

New packages, community projects, luxury eco-resort among upcoming lures

By Marissa Carruthers

Brunei's Temburong district is gearing up for more visitors as South-east Asia's longest overseas bridge nears completion.

The 30km Temburong Bridge and causeway will link the capital Bandar Seri Begawan with the district, eliminating the need for travellers to pass through borders with the Malaysian state of Sarawak and reducing travel time from two hours to less than 30 minutes.

Currently, visitors wanting to get to

Temburong from Bandar Seri Begawan must pass through four border checks, catching a 45-minute speed boat to complete the journey. The B\$1.6 billion (US\$1.2 billion) bridge will shave 70km off the journey.

Salinah Selleh, acting deputy director of Brunei Tourism's tourism development department, told *TTG Show Daily*: "We hope to see the bridge contribute to a rise in tourism. As well as international visitors, we hope it will lead to an increase in domestic tourism. Not a lot of locals have visited Temburong because it is not easily accessible."

Salinah added the ministry is working with tour operators in the area to develop full-day to multiple-day packages that will appeal to both international and domestic visitors.

Siti Nur Hazirah Bte Haji Abd Latif, assistant officer of marketing and product development at tour operator Darussalam Holdings, said the bridge will bring opportunities for communities to develop products that will boost the local economy.

This month, Eco-Green Development announced it will start construction of Temburong's first luxury eco-resort. The B\$4.5 million two-hectare project will feature 30 chalet-style villas and is slated to be completed by the end of 2020.

The company has pledged a further B\$300,000 to refurbish Temburong's old district office into a tourist information centre.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism also plans to invest B\$387,000 into developing a river centre in Batang Duri to service boats cruising to Ulu Temburong National Park.

Hazirah said: "There are a lot of products and attractions that can be developed in Temburong district; with the bridge comes huge potential."

Tom Chong Tze Tzen, assistant tour supervisor of Freme, welcomed the bridge, claiming it adds flexibility. However, he noted: "Without the speedboat, guests lose the experience of travelling through the mangroves."



“There are a lot of products and attractions that can be developed in Temburong district...”

Siti Nur Hazirah Bte Haji Abd Latif
Assistant officer of marketing and product development, Darussalam Holdings

It's the age of active silvers

By Pamela Chow

Retirees are getting gutsier with their travels and eschewing laid-back itineraries for more exciting and adventurous ones, observed travel agents at ATF 2020.

"I have customers from Japan who are 65 years old or older, and they love adventure. They go trekking by waterfalls, cycling and even kayaking," said Norakoun Tanseri, manager, Lao Boutique Travel, who added that favoured itineraries also include nature experiences such as staying in treehouses, gibbon-spotting, and Mekong dolphin-sighting.

Even in a relaxing destination like Bali, older travellers are swapping gear as they take a gander at low-impact water activities and land exploration, said TRM Hospitality's sales manager Mardian Putra.

Nensi Setyaningsih, ASEAN inbound manager, TMS Tours, chimed in that these guests are opting for more invigorating activities that include tree-top adventure courses, snorkelling or a jungle lazy river.

"For our older guests, we can work together with the tour company to arrange a special tour that can provide activities that are not as dangerous. For example, we can replace river rafting with an outdoor lunch (while still giving them access to) other activities on the tour like tree-top adventure and snorkelling," said Mardian.



HAVE YOU GOT A MINUTE?

A new speed dating meeting format was introduced yesterday at ATF 2020, with all buyers and sellers given a quick 60 seconds to make introductions and sow the first seeds for a lasting business connection. *Photo by Yingyong Unanongrak*

In brief

SE Asians crave tech advances

Single apps for all travel needs, passport free travel, and mobile app check-in are the top three new travel norms expected by travellers in the 2020s, said a new report by Agoda.

Specifically, South-east Asians expect these technological advances to simplify travel, with half of all respondents in Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan, the Philippines and Thailand expecting this to be the norm in the next decade.

APAC travel market growing fast

Asia-Pacific is the fastest growing region for travel and tourism, as it is home to 80 per cent of the world's strongest performing tourism cities. The region contributes US\$915 billion, or 33 per cent, in direct travel and tourism GDP, according to a report by the World Travel & Tourism Council.

AHRA speaks out against event partnerships with short-term rentals

By Mimi Hudoyo

The nine-year, five-Games partnership inked last November between the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and Airbnb to provide accommodation for athletes, spectators and fans has put South-east Asian hoteliers on edge even though none of the arrangement will make it to this region.

As a global Partner, Airbnb will support the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020, the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022, the Olympic Games Paris 2024, the Olympic Winter Games Milano Cortina 2026 and the Olympic Games Los Angeles 2028.

Speaking on behalf of the ASEAN Hotel & Restaurant Association (AHRA), president Eugene Yap said such an arrangement will be rejected by hoteliers in South-east Asia due to the lack of regulations on short-term rentals, which could result in safety and security problems that would dent the destination's reputation.

Yap said: "What the IOC did with Airbnb may inspire similar arrangements for regional events such as the Southeast Asian Games. AHRA does not welcome such arrangements."

He explained: "There are issues of short-term rentals being a source of public nuisance, and concerns around safety and security. In the worst-case scenario, one is not able to trace terrorists who come into a destination and stay with an unregulated short-term rental. With legitimate hotels, all guests are registered so the government can get all the information they need."

Working with short-term rentals also result in diminished economic impact for the destination, opined Yap who explained that hotels are a major contributor to local taxes and tourism receipts through their onsite recreational and dining facilities.



Yap: no go in South-east Asia

8 Ideas to Have Infinite in and Around Mandalika

wonderful indonesia 

In the mood for some ultimate beach-hopping, amazing sightseeing, and unique lodgings? Check out these fun ideas to try in and around Mandalika, an exciting destination set to emerge as the new Bali. Take a convenient flight to Lombok International Airport and then a 30-minute drive will transport you to Mandalika that is located at the south coast of Lombok and is also easily accessible via sea. Attracting travelers of all kinds, these 8 great



Merese Hill

Climb the Merese Hills and let the dramatic sunset view steal your heart. Watch the stunning coastline immersed in the gold, orange, and red hues of the sky as the sun sinks into the ocean.



Seger beach

Breathe in the scenic beauty of the secluded Seger Beach from the hilltop, take selfies on the bamboo bridge, enjoy a fresh coconut, snorkel or go surfing.



Unique Hotel

It's not difficult to find a unique accommodation option in Mandalika that suits your travel style. From homestays to world-class resorts, from budget hotels to splurge-worthy villas, Mandalika offers a vast array of lodging choices.



Local Food

From a sumptuous array of international cuisines to tempting traditional local meals, there's something for everyone when it comes to the options of eateries on Kuta Street.



Kuta Mandalika

The Kuta Mandalika Beach is situated in the central tourist area of Mandalika, where the future MotoGP circuits are being constructed. Hang out at the busy beach for a lovely afternoon, enjoy a host of water activities, have fun at the playground with your family, rejoice in the glorious sunset hours, or chill in the nearby cafes. Stop by at



Tanjung Aan

Find your own quiet spot at Tanjung Aan, one of the best beaches in Mandalika, Lombok. Relax on the pristine white sand under a shady palm tree or lounge under a bamboo parasol as you soak in amazing views of the clear blue water. Capture a moment on the Insta-famous beach swing, swim, snorkel, surf or try some stand-up paddle boarding.

Traditional Treatment

Awaken your senses; practice yoga in Mandalika's serene environment. Pamper yourself with traditional treatments or get a relaxing massage at the local spas in Mandalika, Lombok.



Traditional Souvenir

Bring home a piece of Mandalika with you. Buy the traditional souvenirs that include jewelry, handicrafts, and Tenun, a hand-woven fabric that's a signature souvenir of Lombok.

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Singapore reveals major Muslim tourism campaign

New projects aim to encourage unique interactions, spending on sights, dining



From left: STB's Dawn Ng, CrescentRating's Fazal Bahardeen and Have Halal Will Travel's Mikhail Melvin Goh

By Pamela Chow

Singapore is stepping up its game for Muslim travellers with a mega campaign set to launch as early as next month. Sharing the news in a panel session yesterday at ATF 2020, the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) announced that it will be working together with booking platform Have Halal Will Travel (HHWT) and

research company CrescentRating on a series of tourism products and marketing collaterals targeting Muslim travellers around Asia.

These STB projects include a 44-page guide book developed with CrescentRating that details not only Halal dining offerings in Singapore, but also hidden cultural activities and local Malay entrepreneurs and business owners that travellers can discover, revealed Fazal Bahardeen, CEO of CrescentRating & Halaltrip. This book will be released as early as next month in English, and will subsequently be published in Bahasa Melayu and Bahasa Indonesia.

Meanwhile, HHWT will come in with a number of brand partnerships to develop online promotions and tour products targeting Muslim millennials and families. Its co-founder Mikhail Melvin Goh shared: "We are bringing in several big partners for this year-long project with STB. These include Klook, who can direct Muslim travellers to (Singapore's) attractions and vendors, and Traveloka for the Indonesian market. To spice things up, we also brought in a cellphone

manufacturer to do a photowalk."

These roll-outs aim to make Singapore "more discoverable" for Muslim travellers in the region, explained Dawn Ng, area director, Malaysia & Brunei, STB.

According to CrescentRating, this segment holds significant weight in Singapore's tourism balance, accounting for an estimated 18 to 20 per cent of overall arrivals. Among Asia's non-Muslim majority countries, Singapore places first by a long shot, noted Fazal.

While Singapore has been a high-ranking destination among Muslim travellers, a study conducted by HHWT found that the destination has not sufficiently communicated its authentic offerings and stories to the Muslim market.

These upcoming market engagements are hence hoped to plug this gap, while also serving as a "platform for conversion" for Muslims to make further reservations at Singapore's attractions and dining establishments, expressed Ng.

She added that Singapore's multicultural history can serve to pull in more Muslim tourists with personal stories with which they can resonate.

Soundbite

"Clients travel so far and stay for two weeks in the same Thai hotel. They get bored, so we want to combine Thailand with a new destination for Latvians. The Philippines is it, and we want to be one of the first Latvian companies to (offer the Philippines) before she booms."

– Alexander Borovsky, director of Big Asia Tour (Latvia)



Numbers that matter

63 The percentage of surveyed travellers who said they enjoy the airport experience, a jump of 13 percentage points from 2018 when only 50% of travellers said the same, according to the Collinson's Airport Journey report.

88 The percentage of travellers who routinely spend over US\$200 at the airport said the airport experience is an enjoyable part of the journey. On the other hand, the least satisfied travellers spend less than US\$28, indicating that satisfied travellers spend more at airports.

48.5 The percentage contribution Asia-Pacific airports make to global spend on airport upgrades, making the region the busiest for such activities.

Longhaul multi-gen groups on the rise

By Mimi Hudoyo

Multi-generation families from long-haul markets are holidaying in South-east Asia with evolved requirements, observed travel specialists at ATF 2020, with clients now prioritising experiences and activities that can be enjoyed together.

In the past, family groups from the Western markets tended to favour separate activities, often with parents and grandparents happy to leave their young with the resort's kids' club.

Mohammad Zaki, president of RZ Travels US, said: "We have seen a growing number of multi-generation travellers taking bonding trips. Ten to 12 family members will travel together, after having saved their money over a period of time, with the intention of creating a lifetime memory."

Cruises, safari tours and theme parks are on the top of these travellers' list, and Zaki named Singapore, Bangkok and Malaysia as destinations with the richest



South-east Asia witnessing a wave of multi-generation groups from longhaul destinations

multi-generation family offerings.

While some theme park rides may not be suitable for aged travellers, Mohammad Zaki said "grandparents find joy in seeing their grandchildren having fun".

Direct services between the US and Singapore by Singapore Airlines and United Airlines have contributed to the rise in such business opportunities, he added.

Seeing the same trend is Andi Rusli,

director of business development with Panorama Destination Indonesia. His company has handled several family groups from the Netherlands, France and Switzerland.

Multi-generation family tours from the Netherlands were largely led by grandparents who used to live as children in Indonesia, Andi explained.

"They wanted to show both their children and grandchildren the places they used to live in and explore when they were little," he said.

From France and Switzerland, multi-generation family tours tended to be in celebration of wedding anniversaries or birthdays.

"There is usually one appointed co-ordinator in the family who will create a loose itinerary to suit everyone in the family, and to liaise with the local tour guide," said Andi. Such groups tended to confirm accommodation and general destinations ahead of time, but allowed flexibility in daily activities.

Cambodia primes up for ATF 2021

By Marissa Carruthers

Cambodia is gearing up for ATF 2021 with the creation of the country's largest exhibition hall.

Hoy Phireak, deputy director general of tourism development and international cooperation at the Ministry of Tourism, said plans are well underway to host next year's event, which will run from January 17 to 21.

As part of the organisation, a new exhibi-

tion hall is currently being constructed on Chroy Changvar peninsular, which sits at the confluence of the Tonle Sap and Mekong River.

Full details have yet to be unveiled, but the building will surpass the country's existing venues in terms of capacity and facilities.

Chhay Sivlin, president of Cambodia Association of Travel Agents, said: "Besides hosting ATF, the venue will add to

Cambodia's business event offerings and help increase our regional presence as a strong contender."

Hoy added there are plans to shake up the way buyers are selected in response to changing patterns for purchasing travel.

He said: "While we still want to focus on traditional buyers, we also want to go beyond that and look at those buyers who use social media and other Internet platforms."



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EDITORIAL

- Karen Yue** Group Editor
- S Puvanewary** Editor, Malaysia/Brunei
- Mimi Hudoyo** Editor, Indonesia
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- Redmond Sia, Goh Meng Yong** Creative Designers
- Lina Tan** Editorial Assistant

CONTRIBUTORS

- Anne Somanas, Marissa Carruthers, Rosa Ocampo**

SALES & MARKETING

- Pierre Quek** Publisher and Head Integrated Solutions
- Chimmy Tsui** Publisher and Head Integrated Solutions (China)
- Jonathan Yap** Senior Business Manager
- Shirley Tan** Senior Business Manager
- Seth Leow** Business Manager
- Cheryl Lim** Advertisement Administration Manager
- Carol Cheng** Manager Administration and Marketing
- Cheryl Tan** Corporate Marketing Manager
- Jade Ye** 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

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Crystal clear waters in El Nido, Palawan



Seda Vertis North, Manila

What's New

Lio Tourism Estate

This eco-friendly destination in El Nido, Palawan has attractions for varied travellers. A number of resorts are offered, each catering to a specific segment, such as couples, youthful and carefree travellers, and corporate groups. Besides having its own airport terminal and jetty lounge, Lio Tourism Estate also boasts artisanal shops and sustainable activities that are a first in the Philippines.

Ascent

Travellers can now head upwards to beat metro Manila's notorious traffic jam. Helicopter rides can be booked online for flights between Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) and Bonifacio Global City, Makati, Tagaytay and Clark. It reduces travel time from NAIA to Manila to just 10 minutes for only 8,900 pesos (US\$171) per pax.

National Museum of Natural History

The new National Museum of Natural History is proving to be an exciting venue for business events. The renovated colonial building has a soaring ceiling spanning several storeys that offer a natural acoustic for musical and other performances, while the atrium wrapped around the



National Museum of Natural History

Going full throttle on fun

A focus on catering to niche interest and new Asian source markets will help open up fresh destinations across the Philippines, writes **Rosa Ocampo**

In February 2019, the Philippine Department of Tourism (DoT) revived its It's More Fun in the Philippines campaign and anchored it on tourism sustainability.

Sporting a new logo that weaves the unique colours and culture of the Philippines as well as a new font, the refreshed campaign is 100 per cent crowd-sourced using photos and videos shared by tourists. With every photo or video shared through the hashtag #itsmorefuninthephilippines, US\$10 will be donated to the World Wildlife Fund.

The DoT is hopeful that the refreshed campaign will help grow its foreign arrivals by nearly 14 per cent to meet its goal of 8.2 million this year.

Indications at press time are that the country will likely meet this target. In the first eight months of 2019, the Philippines already welcomed 5.5 million visitors.

Most of them were leisure arrivals, but business event arrivals – comprising between 10 and 20 per cent of the total – are catching up.

The healthy arrivals are attributed to the reopening of Boracay island which was closed for six months for a thorough clean-up, influx of mainland Chinese tourists, growing awareness about the destination, and in the case of business events, greater commitment to bidding for international events.

About 70 per cent of the arrivals are still Asians, hence the effort to diversify source markets through intensified marketing and promotions in the west while tapping new Asian and niche markets.

Along with the refreshed campaign, the Philippine Tourism Promotions Board intends to highlight more tourism assets that appeal to niche interest, and part of that will involve opening up new destinations. Surfing, diving and

bird-watching are among the possible niches that will be developed.

The town of Sanchez Mira in Cagayan, northern Philippines has already made the move to attract avid birders by leveraging its position on the flyway of grey-faced buzzards that migrate from Japan to escape winter. Since the discovery of the raptor's activity in Sanchez Mira in January 2018, four groups of Japanese birders, academicians and scientists have called at the destination and remained for a week to two.

The town will go on to host the third International Summit on Grey-Faced Buzzards in 2021.

Meanwhile, the country is due to get its first-ever dedicated cruise pier and terminal by August 2021. The facility, to be operated by Bloomberry Cruise Terminal, will stand adjacent to the Solaire Resort and Casino in the Entertainment City hub along Manila Bay.



Inspiration: Ready, get set, go!

While the Philippines is best known for its fine beaches, it is also becoming known for sports tourism.

Marine sports tourism abound, with the country hosting several annual international sports festivals like dragon boat festival and beach volleyball tournament in Boracay, sailing regatta in Puerto Galera, surfing in Siargao, diving, parasailing, wakeboarding in various parts of the islands.

The Ironman triathlon is now a yearly event in various parts of the country. Several topnotch golf courses in Manila are becoming known to foreign golfers. For adrenaline junkies, go mountain climbing in Mount Pulag (pictured), Mount Apo and other mountains and volcanoes; off-road motorcycling in Rizal and Subic; spelunking in Rizal, Cagayan and Sagada.



Developments to watch

Cleaning out overtourism

Sustainability is the new operative word in Philippine tourism, using Boracay as a model. It remains to be seen if nascent efforts to clean and ward off overtourism in other beach destinations like Bohol, Palawan and Siargao are going to be successful.

Warm Chinese welcome

The Philippines' open-door policy for mainland Chinese travellers, which has become its second largest source market within just several years, is lifting up foreign arrivals to new highs.

The next step is how to earn more foreign exchange from this mass market.

Connectivity boom

Infrastructure facilities are being built and improved on, an integral part of making the Philippines' 7,641 islands become more accessible to tourists.

Diversified draws

Known primarily as a beach destination, the Philippines is reinventing itself by diversifying its showcase to include underrated attractions: farm and agro-tourism; local culture and traditions; colonial herit-

age; culinary; wellness; eco-tourism; and many more.

Lo and behold Iloilo City

Iloilo City in the Visayas is being primed as a leisure and business events destination. An airport deemed to be one of the best in the Philippines, a convention centre, new hotels, a clean-up drive of the river and the city, strict preservation of heritage buildings, and new-builds that help retain old-world charms are among the destination's many strengths.

Tree of Life sculpture adds an extra dash of novelty to meetings and conferences. The museum's spacious grounds are ideal for al fresco cocktails.

Anthony Bourdain's Food Trail

A product of Blue Horizons Travel and Tours, this tour takes corporate groups on the famed food critic's culinary journey to Pampanga, the country's culinary capital. The tour tackles the syncretistic food culture from past colonisers and other influences that were adapted to local ingredients and palate.



From left: Willy's Rock in Boracay; Cebu's Fort San Pedro, a military defense structure built by the Spanish



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The land that keeps smiling

Thailand's tourism confidence holds steady with year-on-year growth, despite micro and macro factors affecting the sector such as the strong Thai baht and the US-China trade spat, writes **Anne Somanas**



Wat Benchamabophit, or Marble Temple, is a major attraction in Bangkok

Bouyant predictions of 10 per cent year-on-year growth for 2019's inbound tourism were scaled back to 9.5 per cent in July, and again in August due to the US-China trade spat and the Thai baht strengthening against other currencies.

In total, the first nine months of 2019 saw international tourist arrivals to Thailand rise 3.5 per cent, from 28.5 million last year to 29.5 million this year.

This led to a concerted effort by the local government and private sector to boost tourism in 2H2019 with ameliorating measures such as the extension of 2,000 baht (US\$66) visa-on-arrival fee waivers for nationals of 20 countries, including China and India – Thailand's fastest-growing group of visitors – until April 30, 2020.

To encourage visitor dispersal from over-touristed hotspots, Airbnb partnered with Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) in November 2019 to launch the Beyond Big Cities website, aimed at promoting travel to lesser-known and emerging destinations across Thailand.

Aside from leisure travellers, other niche segments such as business events, medical and LGBT+ tourism are also on the cards for industry stakeholders.

For example, Thailand-based travel firm Really Really Cool (RRC) has partnered Bangkok Dusit Medical Services to sell bespoke medical tourism packages specifically tailored for Chinese travellers. Thailand receives between 50,000 to 60,000 Chinese medical tourists per year, according to RRC estimates, and is ranked third globally in terms of medical

tourism revenue, according to the Chinese Medical Travel Journal 2018.

Meanwhile on the business events front, Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) partnered with Thai Airways and THAI Smile Airways to launch an APAC MaxiMICE campaign from now until September 2020. Reservations under the campaign can be made from now until August 31, 2020 for travel beginning on January 1, 2020 until September 30, 2020.

Since declaring its proud intentions to openly promote Thailand as an LGBT+ friendly destination in Asia, the kingdom is also stepping up its pursuit of this lucrative segment by positioning herself not just as a destination for holidays and parties, but also as a top-of-mind choice for milestone events for LGBT+ travellers.

Developments to watch

Eye on sustainable development

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), Expedia Group and UNESCO have come together to pledge collaborative efforts in sustainable tourism development. The Expedia Group will support TAT's strategic goals in attracting high-value travellers, promoting emerging destinations to first-time visitors and generating more demand during the low season. The agreement also supports the Thai government's commitment towards marine conservation and marine debris resolution.

Baht strengthening

Due to the strengthening baht, the Tourism Council of Thailand has downgraded the year's tourism revenue projection to 1.9 trillion baht (US\$62.9 billion) from 2.1 trillion baht. Although the country has no control over external factors like the US-China trade spat, it remains to be seen if the government and the Bank of Thailand will lower interest rates to help operators in both the tourism and export sectors. Should the baht break 30 to the dollar in 2020, experts predict the tourism sector will see fewer inbound tourists and more Thais travelling abroad.

Gearing up for medical tourists

Hoping to place in the world's top 10 for medical tourism and establish the country as a wellness hotspot, Thailand may update its visa offerings with a 12-month Medical Visa which would allow holders to stay in the country for up to a year for the purpose of medical treatment.



What's New



Iconsiam

Iconsiam

Iconsiam, a mixed-use development on the banks of the Chao Phraya River, has become a huge draw for tourists in the Charoen Nakhon area. Featured within is the River Park riverside community space; SookSiam, an indoor floating market spotlighting Thai products; a 400m-long water, light and sound feature which is said to be the country's first and longest; and True Icon Hall, a two-level auditorium that seats up to 2,700 people.

Na-Oh Bangkok

Renowned fashion designer Somchai Songwatthana, founder of upcycle-

themed art creative space Chang Chui which made Time Magazine's 2018 list of World's Greatest Places to Visit, takes the sustainable luxury concept to the next level with the opening of Na-Oh Bangkok, a fine-dining experience and unique venue set inside a refitted decommissioned Lockheed L-1011 Tristar airliner.

New train stations

Four culturally atmospheric subway stations (Sanam Chai, Wat Mangkon, Sam Yot and Itsaraphap) have opened near Bangkok's Chinatown. They are designed to be destinations themselves due to beautiful cultural displays.



Na-Oh Bangkok



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The unusual Golden Bridge on Ba Na Hill in Da Nang has become a star attraction in the destination

Vietnam hots up for tourism

International arrivals are climbing, with China leading the pack, but the domestic market has turned out to also be a critical contributor to Vietnam's growing tourism industry, discovers **Marissa Carruthers**

Arrivals to Vietnam continue to grow, with a healthy 22.8 per cent YOY rise recorded in the first nine months of 2019.

According to figures from Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (VNAT), more than 12.8 million foreigners visited the country between January and September.

China dominated the market, with 3,977,183 arrivals – an impressive 48.6 per cent growth.

A recent Bloomberg report highlighted the huge potential that Chinese tourists hold for the country, with the projection that a 30 per cent increase in spending by Chinese tourists would boost Vietnam's economic growth by almost one per cent.

VNAT has been carrying out targeted roadshows in key Chinese cities in a bid to boost this figure further. The organisation remains confident that the continued promotion in these cities will help drive interest and position Vietnam as a prime South-east Asian destination for the Chinese.

South Korea followed close behind with 3,140,693 visitors, a 22.5 per cent increase.

The US was the strongest performing Western market, with 569,113 visitors during that period. This represents a 14.1 per cent rise.

In Europe, Russia topped the table,

with 478,168 arrivals. England followed with 237,355 visitors.

Meanwhile, Vietnam's tourism industry is also enjoying support from the rapidly growing segment of high-spending domestic tourists. According to figures from VNAT, domestic tourists increased by 6.8 million to more than 80 million in 2018.

In 2018, out of Ho Chi Minh's 36.5 million visitors, 29 million were domestic tourists. Hanoi welcomed 28 million visitors, of which 22.5 million were locals. Meanwhile, 4.7 million out of Danang's total 7.7 million arrivals were Vietnamese, and 7.2 million of the 12.5 million tourists who visited Quang Ninh were locals.

As a swathe of new destinations emerge and leading hospitality brands spread their reach to outlying areas, hoteliers say that the domestic market holds huge potential.

Local travellers are also playing a key role in driving business growth for hotels opening in lesser-known areas.

In 2019, Anantara opened a property in the emerging coastal destination of Quy Nhon, while Best Western Hotels and Resorts is gearing up to launch a property in emerging Vung Tau. Centara Hotels and Resorts has bold plans to open more than 20 properties by 2024.



Inspiration: All for love

Romance may not be the first theme that springs to mind when thinking of Vietnam, but the country is home to a range of romantic experiences. Cruise the quieter waters of Lan Ha Bay and relax on one of its tranquil alcoves; forge magical moments on one of Danang's deserted tropical beaches, such as Non Nuoc or Bac My An; or head to Dalat (pictured), a hillside resort town that has been dubbed "Le Petit Paris" for its tree-lined boulevards flanked by stunning French colonial villas as well as breath-taking countryside.

Developments to watch

Talent investments

In a bid to bolster the country's burgeoning travel tech start-up scene, the Vietnamese government launched StarUp Journey 2019 in October to mobilise creative young entrepreneurs and students with start-up products and ideas in tourism and technology.



Clockwise from above: StarUp Journey was launched in October 2019; Formula 1 Vinfast Vietnam Grand Prix is set for Hanoi in November 2020; Vietnam wants to be a heaven for golfers

Fast and furious

A Grand Prix event will be held in Hanoi from April 2020 as part of Formula 1's strategy to broaden the appeal of the sport and reach new audiences around the globe. The annual event is expected to add to Vietnam's global exposure and attract scores of new international visitors.



the site covers an area of about 9,490 hectares, with 1,350 hectares of land allocated for tourism.

Big plans for Lang Co-Canh Duong

As part of its commitment to develop new destinations, Vietnam's prime minister has approved the masterplan for the development of Lang Co-Canh Duong National Tourism Site. Located in the central coastal province of Thua Thien-Hue,

In golf we trust

Golfing in Vietnam is set to soar after an agreement was signed between Golfasian, a leading golf tour company in South-east Asia, and a series of golf courses in central Vietnam. The aim is to transform the country's central coastal region into a desirable golf destination.



What's New

Ngon Gallery Nha Trang

Luxury hospitality group Paradise Vietnam has unveiled its 13th restaurant in the country. Ngon Gallery Nha Trang is located at Citadines Bayfront Nha Trang Hotel and specialises in lobster, with live cooking stations that serve up Vietnamese, Japanese, Korean, Western and Chinese buffet fare for up to 200 diners. Its design blends contemporary with industrial and age-old aesthetics to create a relaxed yet stylish eating experience on the beach.



Caravelle Saigon now sports 10 refreshed meeting spaces following its ongoing massive renovations

The Level Villas

Five-star Melia Ho Tram Beach Resort has launched a "resort within a resort", The Level Villas. The 61 two-, three- and four-bedroom upscale villas feature private pools, barbecue areas, outdoor showers and gardens, living space and separate dining areas. Privileges includes complimentary cocktail time, use of the lounge's meeting room and the 10-treatment room YHI Spa's sauna and steam bath, a pillow menu, and a superior level of personalised service overall with separate check-in and check-out and concierge service.

ness activities that range from hiking and bike rides to water meditation, spa sessions, and extended soaks in Vietnam's only Japanese-style onsen. The five- and seven-day packages also include a cooking class and sightseeing excursions, such as a craft village visit, and trip to Chùa Công Thành pagoda.

Ba National Park. *Ylang* offers 10 suites and two-night wellness package, Senses of Lan Ha. Meditation tutorials, a spa and tai Chi, and more can be conducted on-board. Travellers can also enjoy a range of healthy dining options.

Ninh Binh also manages the neighbouring convention centre, which features multiple meeting rooms for a range of events.

Alba Wellness Valley by Fusion

Travellers seeking wellness packages can indulge in a series of new three-, five-, and seven-day wellness voyages that include accommodation, nutritionally-balanced meals and detox drinks, and daily well-

Heritage Line

Heritage Line introduced a new cruise boat, *Ylang*, in mid-August for a series of cruises on Vietnam's Lan Ha Bay. Less travelled than neighbouring Halong Bay, Lan Ha Bay is home to a range of excursions featuring cycling and hiking in Cat

Meliá Ninh Binh

The Reed Hotel will be rebranded to Meliá Ninh Binh this month. The 153-key property occupies the area's tallest building and boasts a state-of-the-art fitness centre, VIP Lounge, several F&B outlets and, in a bid to elevate the destination's events appeal, 4,000m² of meeting space and first-rate event technologies. Meliá

Caravelle Saigon

Caravelle Saigon has debuted new and larger guestrooms in its Opera Wing and fresh meeting spaces after a massive renovation. The hotel's 10 meeting spaces have been upgraded, with The Caravelle Ballroom now able to cater for up to 400 guests. The extensive overhaul of the property will continue, with the project slated for completion by early 2020.



From left: Ngon Gallery Nha Trang; The Level Villas on Ho Tram Beach; Heritage Line's new Ylang cruise boat

Power in numbers

The Singapore Tourism Board has forged partnerships with Wego, Traveloka and Trip.com to grow tourist arrivals to the city-state. By **Pamela Chow**



Shopping expenditures are up but declines in other components pulled overall tourism receipts down; popular retail haven ION Orchard mall pictured



Inspiration: Art infusion

Singapore has its share of strict regulations against graffiti, but strikingly beautiful street art can still be found in many corners of the city. Participate in a different kind of art gallery tour with local operator Monster Day Tours, which conducts free walking tours through the painted alleys of Kampong Glam and Little India. Free-and-easy visitors can also check out the newly refreshed Kampong Glam's Gelam Outdoor Gallery (pictured), or go mural-hunting among the shophouses of Tiong Bahru.

What's New

Siloso Green

Sentosa has welcomed a new waterfront lifestyle quarter featuring eateries, shops, concert and event spaces, as well as waterfront accommodation. The 24,500m² Siloso Green comprises bars, food trucks, innovative business concepts and live music boasting a shipping container theme. Along with a pilot trial of driverless shuttle buses, the new space is an effort to extend visitor stay in Sentosa at night.

New gems at Jewel Changi Airport

Jewel Changi Airport has opened the Changi Experience Studio and Canopy Park, elevating the air hub's transit offerings. The 3,000m² Changi Experience Studio features 10 zones of interactive games, projection storytelling, immersive shows and gallery exhibits about the airport. The Canopy Park is a 14,000m² space comprising eight F&B outlets; events space Cloud9 Piazza; seven play at-

tractions and creative gardens, such as the Mirror Maze and Hedge Maze, Manulife Sky Nets, Discovery Slides, and the glass-floored Canopy Bridge.

NERF Action Xperience

Kingsmen Creatives has launched the world's first NERF Action Xperience in Marina Square. The arena spans more than 1,600m² encompassing four different play zones themed after extreme natural environments to challenge players of all ages. The Compete zone features worlds Zombie City and Camp Dune requiring teamwork and strategy; Conquer offers obstacles like rope courses; Challenge has mini zip lines and a NERF dart ball pool for children aged six and under; while Create allows visitors to use Super Soakers to tie-dye T-shirts and tote bags.

lyf Funan Singapore

The Ascott has debuted its millennial-

Inbound tourism continues to climb for Singapore, when in 1H2019, International Visitor Arrivals (IVA) increased 1.3 per cent over the same period last year to reach 9.3 million visitors.

China (1.8 million), Indonesia (1.5 million), India (0.7 million), Malaysia (0.6 million) and Australia (0.5 million) were Singapore's top five international source markets in 2019. These markets accounted for 56 per cent of total IVA in January to June 2019.

And although tourism receipts reached S\$13.1 billion (US\$9.6 billion) for 1H2019, it is a decline of three per cent compared to the same period last year. In the second quarter alone, tourism receipts were estimated to be S\$6.5 billion, a 1.3 per cent decline over the same period last year. This was due to lower expenditures across some components including accommodation, F&B and sightseeing, even though shopping and other components grew.

To drive arrivals, Singapore Tourism Board (STB) has signed a number of partnerships.

Search engine Wego – the largest online travel marketplace in the Middle East and North Africa – has teamed up with STB Middle East to attract more travellers from the Gulf Cooperation Council during the winter season.

STB and Traveloka, South-east Asia's largest technology company in the travel and lifestyle industry, have also signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) to promote Singapore as a preferred destination for visitors from five major South-east Asian markets: Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.

Trip.com, an independent OTA part of the Ctrip Group, and STB have agreed to deepen their cooperation through multi-pronged efforts which include technology and data, exploring product R&D and brand marketing.

focused brand with lyf Funan Singapore, housing 412 rooms ranging from twin-sharing studios to six-bedroom apartments for short- and long-term stay. These include two unique configurations centred on the coliving concept, featuring individual bedrooms and shared living, kitchen and bathroom spaces. Other coliving aspects of the property include an expansive lobby of community spaces and meeting rooms, an open gym and a social kitchen. Guests will also be able to participate in workshops, movie screenings and tours.

Katong Joo Chiat Art Circuit

Organised by Colorinc with the support of the Singapore Tourism Board, the new arts and heritage self-guided trail takes visitors through the Katong Joo Chiat precinct to discover unique architecture and access memorable activities such as Peranakan.



Marina Bay Sands

Developments to watch

Infrastructure boom

In April, it was announced that the Jurong Lake District (JLD) in west Singapore is set for a major transformation and will soon welcome an integrated tourism development with attractions, hotels, retail and F&B offerings. On the south side, Sentosa island will soon welcome a host of developments that are expected increase the destination's appeal to a wider market segment.

Marina Bay Sands to get fourth tower

Marina Bay Sands is pumping S\$4.5 billion into plans that include a fourth tower, to be constructed on roughly eight acres of land beside the current resort. It will feature a suites-only luxury hotel with some 1,000 keys, a sky roof with a swimming pool and a "signature restaurant", ballrooms, exhibition halls and F&B offerings.

Resorts World Sentosa expands

As part of its S\$4.5 billion redevelopment plans, Resorts World Sentosa will expand its existing hotels in the Central Zone and introduce a new waterfront lifestyle complex helmed by two new destination hotels, adding a total of up to 1,100 more rooms to the integrated resort.

Easier arrivals

More visitors to Singapore can now submit electronic arrival cards online up to 14 days before their arrival, as part of an Immigration and Checkpoints Authority trial. This service applies to visitors arriving via transport operators AirAsia, Jetstar Asia, Cathay Pacific, Singapore Airlines, Transtar Travel, BatamFast Ferries, Bintan Resort Ferries, Horizon Fast Ferry, and Majestic Fast Ferry.



From top: lyf Funan Singapore; NERF Action Xperience

Time to raise the curtain

By Yingyong Unanongrak



Casa del Mar Langkawi's Fauzi Romli, Hard Rock Hotel Penang's Nima Tan, HPL Hotels & Resorts Singapore's Michael Chua, Hard Rock Hotel Bali's Rohaizad Puteh and Concorde Hotel Shah Alam's Siti Khafasha Mohd Khalil



Santika Indonesia Hotels & Resorts' William, The Kayana Indonesia's Rai Hambarika, The Anvaya Bali's Wida Yanti, Santika Indonesia Hotels & Resorts' Bayu Putera, Hotel Santika Jakarta's Yohanes Junaidi Imanuel and The Samaya Bali's Ganny Akbar



Penang Global Tourism's Malathi Muniandy, Olive Tree Concepts Malaysia's Lee Swee Yeong, Discovery Overland Holidays Malaysia's Henry Wong, Penang Global Tourism's Yoon Pauline, and Eastern & Oriental Hotel Malaysia's Andy Teh and Cillia Khoo



The Empire Brunei's Maryani Sabtu and Luke Wooley



Tourism Promotions Board Philippines' James SY



Royal Brunei Airlines' Ai-Ling Ng, James Millett, Alirahim Hj Abdul Rani and Soon Chian Chin



Business Travel Club Poland's Slawomir Bloch, Ventotoso Italy's Mara Armanini and RZ Travels US' M Zaki



Trips4Fundraising US's Alyssa Johnson



The Jayakarta SP Hotel & Spa Jakarta's Rahadian Firmansyah and The Jayakarta Lombok Beach Resort & Spa's Cherry Abdul Hakim



Sabah Tourism's Zarinah Amiludin and Ebony Loong



Pilgrimas Italy's Juozas Pekis

All ready to rock the showfloor

By Yingyong Unanongrak



Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy Indonesia's Angela Tanoesoedibjo (third from right) giving her destination the thumbs up



Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism Brunei's Ali Apong (middle) is all smiles with his team

Below: Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, Department of Tourism Marketing Laos' Somxay Choungheumoua and Phouvanh Xaysena; Crowne Plaza Vientiane's Sirisuck Viradet; Tourism Laos' Sengsoda Vanthanouvong; Pullman Luang Prabang's Supatta Noimuang; Lao Boutique Travel's Norakoun Tanseri; and Mekong Cruises Laos' Bounthavy Hansaya



Okada Manila's Cielo Ortega-Reboredo and Sharon Yabut



Myanmar's Tourism Minister U Ohn Maung (in orange) and his team are ready for buyers

Vietnam National Administration of Tourism's Vi Thi Minh Tam, Tran Phong Binh and Luyen Hong Anh; and Danang Center for Tourism Promotion's Phan Ngoc Thanh Binh



Minister of Tourism Cambodia's Thong Khon (centre) leads a vibrant delegation



Tourism Authority of Thailand's Klissada Ratanapruk (centre) and his team



Ministry of Tourism India's Sudeshna Ramkumar and Rediscover India's Hilal Kolu



TTG Asia Media's Darren Ng; Culture, Sports and Tourism Department Thailand's Sing Limpirat and Woranuj Singhato; Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau's Chuta Tharachai and Pallin Phoypro; and TTG Asia Media's Deng Chengzi and Ooi Peng Ee



Tourism Promotions Board Philippines' Arnold Gonzales (ninth from left) pulls together a fun team

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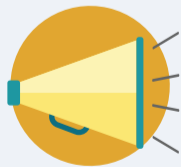
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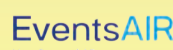
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