

# CACCI

## Tourism Newsletter

Volume 6

June 2011



### Message from the Chairman

As Chairman of the Asian Tourism Council, I am pleased to present the 6th Volume of the Newsletter of Asian Tourism Council to all our colleagues in the tourism sector.

This issue not only highlights the trends in the Asia-Pacific region, but also includes the latest news of the region and interesting reports on tourism. I hope that you will find the articles included in this Newsletter of great value, and look forward to your contribution to the Newsletter in the future. Interested parties may visit [http://www.cacci.org.tw/pubx.php?study\\_id=25&type=Product And Service Council Newsletters for previous volumes](http://www.cacci.org.tw/pubx.php?study_id=25&type=Product And Service Council Newsletters for previous volumes).

Since assuming the Chairmanship in February 2011, I have found this Council a valuable platform for information exchange and networking for all representatives from the region's tourism industry. Therefore, all CACCI members are encouraged to take advantage of the Council and the Newsletter as channels to voice their opinions and viewpoints.

My Best Wishes

*Anura Samarawickrema Lokuhetty*  
Chairman

### Asian Council on Tourism Holds Breakout Session in Istanbul

The Asian Council on Tourism (ACT), one of the Product and Service Councils of CACCI, held a breakout session on March 7, 2011 as part of the program of the 25th CACCI Conference held in Istanbul, Turkey.

The breakout session featured speakers who discussed trends and developments, problems and issues, and prospects for growth in the region's tourism industry. The session participants also explored possible areas of cooperation among CACCI members in the tourism sector.

Mr. Anura Lokuhetty, the newly appointed Chairman of the ACT and concurrently President of the Tourist Hotels Association of Sri Lanka, chaired the breakout session and was one of the presenters as well.

### Trends in Global and Asian Tourism

In his presentation, Mr. Lokuhetty spoke on the "Current State of Tourism in Asian Countries." Citing tourism as the largest industry and creator of jobs, he noted that tourist arrivals globally was up by 7% to 935 million from the previous year, following the 4% decline in 2009 caused by the economic crisis. He pointed out that Asia was the first region to recover from the crisis, posting a 13% growth in tourist arrivals in 2010.

The Middle East also registered a rapid growth of 14%, boosted by intraregional travel favored by high oil prices. The American countries had a

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respectable growth of 8% due to a gradual recovery in the US economy, the vitality of the Latin American countries, and the increasing regional integration of Central and South America.

Mr. Lokuhetty said that Asia remains a dynamic region for world tourism due to various factors, including its multicultural and multi-religious nature, its historical advantages, its incredibly compact area, its abundance of natural beauty, and the wealth of UNESCO sites in the region.

Because of these factors, Mr. Lokuhetty said that tourism in Asia can be classified into several segments, namely, religious tourism, cultural tourism, nature tourism, beach tourism, eco-tourism, wildlife tourism, and heritage tourism.

While mentioning some of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of the tourism sector in Asia, the ACT Chairman stressed that the common objective of Asia as a region should be to strengthen the interdependence of its member countries, work closer as Asians towards increased integration and cooperation between all players in the tourism value chain, with the view to increasing their competitiveness and to responding more effectively to the challenges ahead.



*Left to right: Hasan Arat, Mr. Anura Lokuhetty and Salman Javed*



### **Tourism in Turkey**

Mr. Hasan Arat, vice chairman of the Tourism Sector Assembly of Turkey, made a presentation on the Status and Prospects of Tourism in Turkey.

In his speech, Mr. Hasan reported that the number of arrivals in Turkey was 28.6 million in 2010, spending a total of US\$20.8 million during the year. The largest arrivals in 2010 were from Germany with 4.3 million, followed by Russia with 3.1 million, and UK with 2.6 million. Visitors from Asia totalled 4.6 million, about half which were from South Asian countries (including Iran).

Mr. Hasan also cited the following facts and figures on Turkey's tourism sector: (1) Turkey ranks 9th in tourism revenue and 7th in tourist arrivals in the world; (2) 6.5% of the total employment in Turkey is in the tourism sector; (3) Tourism receipts' contribution to cover the foreign trade deficit of Turkey was 86% in 2009; and (4) tourism is among the top three sectors that attract the highest level of investments.

Looking forward, Mr. Arat invited foreign investments in Turkish tourism which he said expects some 60 million foreign visitors and US\$60 billion in receipts in 2023, the year that marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Republic of Turkey.

### **Tourism in Pakistan**

Mr. Salman Javed, Chief Operating Officer of Korean Air in Pakistan.

He spoke on the development of tourism in Pakistan.

Mr. Javed reported that due to the impact of the global financial and economic crisis, tourist arrivals in Pakistan declined by 4.2% in 2009 to 880 million, the bulk of which coming from Europe (44.3%), followed by South Asia (20.5%) America (19.0%), and the Pacific and East Asia (10.4%). Accordingly, international tourism receipts fell by 5.7% to US\$852 million.

However, Mr. Javed said that Pakistan has a huge potential to further enhance its tourism as the country is endowed with a varied landscape of deserts, hill stations, valleys and mountains, all of which offer opportunities for adventure sports like mountaineering and trekking, white water rafting, skiing jeep and camel safaris, car rallies, and mountain biking, among others.

According to Mr. Javed, Pakistan is a hot spot for religious tourism as the country is blessed with sacred religious places for Muslims, Buddhists, Sikhs and Hindus. Its culture and heritage consists of Indus valley civilization, Gandhara, early Muslim and Moghul, and colonial type, meaning Pakistanis are hospitable people and have unique cultures. On the lighter side, Pakistan's coastal zone spreads over 1,000 kilometers along the Arabian Sea, which offers long-term development potential for beach resorts.

Mr. Javed reported that Pakistan's longstanding vision is to develop its tourism sector as nation priority in a sustainable and acceptable manner, taking full advantage of regional and international trends, and developments. It can significantly contribute to the improvement of quality of life in Pakistan while promoting the country's cultural and natural heritage. Its mission is to create an enabling environment for the tourism industry by providing world-class facility that commensurate with its rich cultural heritage rare archaeological treasure and exquisite environmental beauty in close partnership and coordination between the public and private sector while preserving and protecting its cultural and moral values and protecting tourist friendly image of the country.



# Mr. Anura Samarawickrema Lokuhetty Appointed New Chairman of Asian Tourism Council



With the coming of the new year of 2011, the Asian Tourism Council (ATC) also turns over a new leaf by the appointment of its new Chairman Mr. Anura Samarawickrema Lokuhetty from Sri Lanka. Mr. Lokuhetty, 53 years old, is concurrently Deputy Chairman and Chief Executive of Serene Pavilions, and President of Tourist Hotels Association of Sri Lanka, the apex body representing all hotels in Sri Lanka.

Recommended by Mr. Prema Cooray, former Chairman of ATC, and endorsed by the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce (CCC), Mr. Lokuhetty has made a large amount of contributions to promote the tourism sector in Sri Lanka and actively participated in international tourism events. Before he joined Serene Pavilions, Mr. Lokuhetty has been in the forefront of the hotel industry for many years.

He was Junior Executive for Food & Beverage at Palm Garden Hotel from 1980 to 1983, Restaurant Manager at Riverina Hotel from 1983 to 1984, Food & Beverage Manager from 1984 to 1985, Assistant Manager from 1986-1987, Acting Manager in 1987, and Manager from 1987 to 1989 at Palm Garden Hotel, Acting Manager from 1989-1990 and General Manager from 1990 to 1991 at Riverina Hotel, Project Director at Eden Hotel Project in Beruwala from 1992 to 1994, General Manager at Eden Hotel from 1994 to 1996, Area Director for Confifi Management Services Limited from 1996 to 1997, Director of Confifi Management Services Limited and Managing Director of Confifi Engineering (Pvt) Limited from 1997 to 2002, Director Operations & General Manager at Galle Face Hotel from 2002 to 2005, Chief Executive Officer at Confifi Group of Companies from 2005 to 2006, Chief Executive Officer of Ceylon Hotels Corporation and Chief Operative Officer of Galle Face Hotel Management Company from 2006 to 2008. From 2007 he started building a very upmarket boutique hotel with his foreign business partner and now it is in operation since 2009, October 31st. This boutique hotel has won so many international awards and recently it won the award as the Bet Boutique Hotel in Sri Lanka. And from 2009, Mr. Lokuhetty has been working as the Deputy Chairman and Chief Executive of Serene Pavilions. He was nominated as the Tourism Entrepreneur of the Year at the Sri Lanka Tourism Awards 2010.

Among his working experiences, Mr. Lokuhetty managed Queens Hotel, Suisse Hotel in Kandy, Lihiniya Surf Hotel, Bentota and all Ceylon Hotels Corporation hotels, motels, rest houses in most strategic locations in Sri Lanka and fast food outlets totaling 21 during his post as Chief Executive Officer at Ceylon Hotels Corporation and Chief Operative Officer at Galle Face Hotel Management Company. When he was Director of Confifi Management Services Limited and Managing Director of Confifi Engineering (Pvt) Limited, Mr. Lokuhetty was responsible for the operations of Eden Resort and Spa, Riverina Hotel, Royal Park hotel (Dhaka), Club Palm Garden Hotel, Confifi Beach Hotel, Horizon Beach Hotel, Marawila Holiday Resort and Royal Park, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Apart from his business performance, Mr. Lokuhetty is also an active member of tourism related organizations and associations, including Committee Member of Tourist Hotel Association of Sri Lanka, Vice Chairman of Tourism Training Association of Sri Lanka, Board Member of Sri Lanka Institute of Hotel Management, Fellow Member of Hotel School Graduates Association, Member of the Organization of Professional Associations of Sri Lanka (OPA), and Member of the Institute of Management UK.

He also held ministerial appointments, such as Member of Vocational Training Institute of Kalutara appointed by Hon Minister of Labor and Vocational Training Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa from 1996 to 1999, Committee Member of Ministerial Task Force Committee on the Problems of Beach Pollution and Beach Boys appointed by Hon Minister of Tourism Mr. Dharmasiri Senanayake in 1998, and Member of the Board of Management of the Institute of Tourism and Hotel Management, among others.

Mr. Lokuhetty gained his Specialized Diploma in food and beverage operations from Sri Lanka Institute of Tourism and Hotel Management in 1982, and a Diploma in Business Management from Sri Lanka's National Institute of Business Management in 1987. He is married with two sons and enjoys golf, swimming and reading during his leisure time. ❀

# Heartfelt Thanks from Osaka, Japan



Concerning the Great East Japan Earthquake that occurred on March 11, 2011, we wish to express our heartfelt thanks for all the support and comforting words from everyone in countries around the world.

While continuing aid efforts for the affected areas, we are also stepping forward to help realize Japan's full recovery. As the core of the second largest metropolitan area in Japan, Osaka must now take a leading role to reenergize the whole Japanese economy.

Given its distance from the areas affected, Osaka has suffered virtually no damage. Here in Osaka, and the rest of Western Japan, the living environment and business infrastructure, including water, electricity and transportation are safe, sound and fully functioning as usual.

All of Western Japan particularly the Osaka/Kansai region will welcome visitors from all over the world with an unchanging spirit of hospitality, as we have always done. We urge you to help Japan's recovery by visiting Osaka/Kansai region and other unaffected regions. We hope that with your help, we can act as a light for the affected regions, and reinvigorate Japan as a whole.

## <About Osaka>

Osaka is the tourism hub of Western Japan where Kyoto, Nara, and Kobe can be reached easily via subway, railway, or the expressway networks. Known for its fascinating blend of traditional culture and modern life, Osaka is a megacity of nearly nine million people. We would like to give you three reasons why you should consider Osaka as your destination.

### *1. Excellent Access, Meeting Facilities and Accommodation*

Reaching Osaka is easy by Kansai International Airport (KIX), which provides direct services to 73 cities in 26 countries/regions throughout the world, as well as many cities in Japan (as of summer, 2011). The airport, which acts as an Asian Hub and services a large number of flights to the Asia-Pacific region, is conveniently located around 30 minutes by train from downtown Osaka.

Osaka is equipped with first-class meeting and event facilities, including the Osaka International Convention Center, Osaka Central Public Hall (Neo-Renaissance brick architecture built in 1918), INTEX Osaka (one of the largest international exhibition halls in Japan), and Kyocera Dome Osaka.

In addition to being home to some of the world's foremost hotels, there is also an abundance of reasonably priced accommodation. With approximately 40,000 guest rooms situated throughout the city, there is sure to be something to suit the needs of every visitor.



### *2. Rich Variety of Tourist Attraction- World Heritage Sites*

Having been the center of economic and cultural development for many centuries, Osaka has many traditional and modern sightseeing attractions, including Bunraku (a traditional puppet theater designated by UNESCO as an intangible cultural asset), Osaka Castle, Universal Studios Japan and Kaiyukan aquarium, which is one of the largest aquariums in the world. There are always things to do, places to visit, and new things to discover.

One of the Osaka's greatest advantages is its proximity to the many World Heritage sites that are scattering through the cities of Kyoto, Nara and Wakayama, some no more than 30 minutes away. Day trips can also be made to Hiroshima.

### *3. Enchanting Cuisine and Delightful Shopping*

Known for its rich food culture, Osaka is a gourmet paradise offering the best from land and sea. Shopping is also a delight in this city that is famous as a City of Merchants. The city boasts the largest underground mall and the longest shopping arcade in Japan, in addition to many department stores, outlet malls and stores selling top fashion brands, and the famous Nipponbashi consumer electronics and pop culture district.

## <The Aqua metropolis>

Thanks to its convenient location, Osaka has developed as the gateway to Japan, serving as a center of international trade and cultural interaction. The city had become a center of distribution for the rest of Japan, with many specialty products from

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## Heartfelt Thanks ... Continued from page 4

the provinces finding their way to Osaka. The canals and bridges that were built by the people to facilitate the movement of goods helped to shape the city and their Riverside attractions include the tree-lined banks of the gently flowing rivers in the Okawa-Nakanoshima area, the lively Dotombori area and the Bay area with its new amusements and theme parks.

### <Immersed in the Romance of History>

From around the 5th century through to the 8th century, Osaka was declared the nation's capital several times and played a major role in trade and cultural exchange. Later, the city served as a base for the pilgrimage routes to areas such as Kumano.

Osaka Castle was constructed during the 16th century by Hideyoshi Toyotomi, who managed to unify the various warring factions within Japan, and during the 17th century, the city became a center for trade and distribution activities and was referred to as the "nation's kitchen". Underpinning this prosperity were the city's resourceful and enterprising merchants, who introduced the world's first futures trading system.

The city is full of historic places, especially on the Uemachi plateau that runs north to south through the city. Osaka Castle and the remains of Naniwanomiya Place are located in the north, Shitennoji, which is one of the oldest Buddhist temples in Japan, is located in the central area, and Sumiyoshi-taisha Grand Shrine, which is said to have been built in the 3rd century, is located further to the south.

### <City of Culinary Delight>

(Délice)

In Osaka, in June of 2008, organizations to the restaurant industry in cooperation with educational institutions, the government and various business groups formed the Gourmet City- Osaka Promotion Council in order to further promote the food culture of Osaka to the world. Then in September 2008, Osaka joined the Délice network of "Good Food Cities of the World".

Established in the city of Lyon in France in September 2007, the aim of the Délice network is to bring together cities whose food cultures are important part of their identities. The organization also seeks to foster and promote these food cultures and enhance the spirit of fine dining, while encouraging intercultural exchanges among member cities.

Osaka is the first city in Japan and only the second city in Asia to join this network, following China's Guangzhou, and its acceptance is proof of the city's worldwide reputation as a gourmet city. The city is determined to make the most of this opportunity to showcase Osaka's unique food culture to the world.

A distinctive feature of Osaka's food culture is the use of seaweed and fish stock, which is known as "dashi". Used to bring out the natural taste of ingredients and to enhance the aroma of dishes ranging from everyday udon and takoyakai (octopus dumplings) to the most sumptuous of gourmet dishes, "dashi" is the epitome of Osaka's food culture and even today has an ongoing influence on the food culture of Japan. In addition to the many traditional Japanese restaurants in Osaka, there are also more modern restaurants that have incorporated cooking styles and techniques from other areas of Japan and from overseas, as well as restaurants with famous chefs cooking French and Italian cuisine, and world-class patisseries. The huge range of top-class cuisine available means that visitors are sure to find something exceptional as they explore this gourmet city.

### <The Performing Arts>

Osaka boasts a wide range of traditional performing arts, including noh, kyogen, bunraku and kamigata kabuki.

Noh and kyogen is the first World Intangible Cultural Heritage in Japan designated by UNESCO in 2001.

Bunraku, which was registered by UNESCO as a World intangible Cultural Heritage in 2003, is a form of traditional puppet theater that originated in Osaka more than 300 years ago. Accompanied by shamisen music and narrative song, puppeteers manipulate the puppets to create subtle movements and expressions.

One of the characteristics of Kamigata Kabuki is the way in which it realistically portrays a wide range of social obligations, human emotions and romance. In 2005 this too was registered as a World Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO.

At the Yamamoto Nohgakudo Theater, "Evening of Osaka Traditional Performing Arts" takes place from 6:00pm to 7:50pm on the first and third Saturdays each month. In each show, four different types of Osaka traditional performing arts such as noh, kyogen and bunraku are performed in succession for about 15 minutes each.

For further information, please visit the Osaka Tourist Guide at <http://www.osaka-info.jp/en/>.

*The Osaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry* ❀



# Recent Developments of the Tourism Industry of Sri Lanka

Following the cessation of the armed conflict in May 2009 and with the dawn of peace, Sri Lanka is now viewed as a prime tourist destination by the Global Tour Industry. The prestigious New York Times newspaper in its issue on 10th January 2010 listed Sri Lanka as the “No. one destination among the most thirty sought after tourist destinations in the world.” The National Geographic Magazine of November 2009 rated “Sri Lanka as one of the best trips for discerning tourist.”

Last week, Sri Lanka welcomed the 250,000th tourist within the four months of year 2011, a historical milestone for the island nation. Encouraged by positive arrival, Sri Lanka has revised upwards its tourist target for 2011 from 700,000 to 800,000. In 2010, Tourist arrivals increased to 655,000 surpassing the previous record of 566,000 in 2004. In 2010, tourism generated around US\$ 576 millions and provided employment opportunities to around 55,000 directly and another 73,000 indirectly. The policy authorities are now planning to host 2.5 Million arrivals of tourists in 2016 with the expected earning of US\$ 2,500 Millions. The tourism in Sri Lanka now ranks the fourth largest foreign exchange earner and has the potential to enhance its ranking further upwards. These salutary developments were mainly attributed to the dawn of a peaceful environment throughout the country since 2009 with removal of negative travel advisories issued by tourists originating countries and innovative and multi-faceted tourist products offered by the Sri Lankan Tourism Industry.



The Tourism Industry in Sri Lanka is now provided with a unique opportunity and better prospects than ever before in its recent history. The country undeniably possesses enormous advantages to make it ideally qualified and suited for development of Tourism Industry. Frequently seen beautiful rivers, natural lakes and ponds with Lotus, White water streams and large number of fascinating water falls, verdant mountains, sandy beaches, vivid and varied natural beauty, rare flora and fauna, archeological ruins of ancient historical civilization and above all aged old and most renowned legendary Sri Lankan hospitality earned Sri Lanka a unique place in the tourism map of the world. What is most attractive in Sri Lanka for a discerning traveler is that the country offers different attractiveness almost within three to four hours of time despite small geographical extent of the island. Whether the traveler is an environmentalist, whether the traveler loves environment and wildlife, adventure or sport, heritage or history, historical places of religious worship, wellness or traditional ayurvedic treatments, business, trade or conference Sri Lanka offers unmatched opportunities. An excellent mix of natural and cultural attraction provides variety of tourism activities from small scale tourism to mass tourism. Sri Lanka is blessed with wide ranging ecological and favorable climate diversity with scenic beauties located within a small geographical area. Almost all regions of the country can be visited within a short period of time and therefore it is ideally for compact holidays.

With the revival of tourists' arrival, the industry is now actively planning for new investment to meet the increasing demand to meet high standard of hospitality. One of the flagship investments Sri Lanka has recently received is the advent of prestigious Shangri-La Hotels Chain to Sri Lanka. The Hong-Kong based Shangri-La Asia Limited purchase a 6 Acres of prime land at the Galle-Face green promenade, a prominent land mark in Colombo to develop multi-used complex with high-end retail facilities, deluxe apartments and five-hundred rooms luxury hotel to open in 2014. A Chinese institutional investor has also planned to open a new hotel in the same area of Colombo.

Kalpitiya Dutch Bay Resort Development Project is another flagship and ambitious project launched by the Sri Lanka Tourism recently. The proposed zone located in the Puttalam District of North Western Province consisting of 14 islands and about 150 Kilometers North of the Capital Colombo. The region is a peninsular that separates the Puttalam lagoon from the Indian Ocean and is a marine sanctuary with a diversity of habitats ranging from bar reefs, flat coastal plains, salt pans, mangroves swamps, salt marshes and vast sand dune beaches. It is expected to develop the zone with world class facilities for fishing, tourism, deep sea diving, nature-based tourism, beach tourism, sport and adventure tourism, agro-tourism, culture tourism, village tourism and event tourism.

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## Tourism: A Major Locomotive of the Turkish Economy

The remarkable achievements in the past 20 years made the tourism sector one of the main locomotive sectors of Turkish economy.

Although Turkish economy experienced many internal and external crisis during the last two decades, tourism, being resistant to all kinds of shocks, has been the only sector to grow at an annual average rate of 10 % between 1990 and 2010.

It stimulates overall production in the economy by creating demand for more than 50 other sectors. Tourism is the biggest net foreign currency generating sector in the economy.

In 2010, Turkish tourism revenue was 20,8 billion US\$ that was over 50 % of its total investment portfolio, which is nearly 40 billion \$ excluding public sector investments.

In 2010, about 3 billion US\$ is invested in Turkish tourism. With regard to investment volume, tourism ranks in the top 5 industries invested in the Turkish economy.

On the other hand, Number of employment in the tourism sector is around 1,5 million that corresponds to 6,5 % of overall employment in Turkish economy.



World Tourism Organization ranks Turkey 7th in arrivals and 10th in tourism revenue in the world for the year 2010. Average growth of Turkish tourism in the past decade is way much higher than the world average.

The most important advantage of the Turkish tourism is

the fact that it offers value for money, there is a good balance between price and quality. Turkey has the newest tourism facilities in the region offering high guest satisfaction.



As price becomes key issue in crisis periods, like in 2009 and in 2010 favorable exchange rates are also considerable advantage.

Another fact is that especially during the crisis periods, travelers prefer closer destinations than long-haul destinations; so the geographical location of Turkey, being a country that can be reached by 2 to 3 hours flight by 2 billion people, is a big advantage. In this context, charter flights of Turkish air carriers play very important role. All inclusive system in most of the resorts and easy visa process to Turkey are some of the main factors that add additional point to the competitive edge of Turkish tourism industry.

### TYPES OF TOURISM IN TURKEY



1. Coastal Tourism: Turkey is a very important destination for coastal tourism as it is a peninsula

surrounded by three seas. The most popular and beautiful destinations are, in South Aegean Coast, İzmir, Cesme, Ayvalık, Kusadası, Bodrum, Datca, Bozburun, Marmaris, Göcek, Fethiye, in Mediterranean Coast, Kalkan, Kas, Finike, Kemer, Antalya, Mersin and in Black Sea Coast are, Zonguldak, Trabzon and Samsun.

2. Hunting - Geographic structure of Turkey is appropriate for development of hunt tourism in connection with its plant cover and wild life. Hunting grounds, which will be opened to hunting tourism are determined and

### Recent Developments ... Continued from page 6

In the infrastructure sector while expanding the Colombo International Airport, construction of a second international airport in the Down South of the island has been commenced and expected to complete soon. For facilitation of cruise tourism, the world renowned natural harbour of Trincomalee in the Eastern Province and the Galle harbour of the Southern Province are to be developed expeditiously.

At present, facilities are available for prospective tourists to reserve accommodation, transport and making payments through electronic means. A project to improve the web based hotel reservations and destination management process to meet the requirement of the customer is also being implemented. The immigration authorities are also planning to introduce electronic visa processing system for prospective tourists.

The private sector tourist operators and the public sector policy formulators are attached high priority for sustainable tourism development giving high priority for safe guarding the environmental concerns and the social responsibility cast on the sector. With the new unique opportunities available for the development of the tourist sector, it is no doubt that Sri Lankan tourism will mark a new page providing quality services to the discerning travelers all over the world.

*(This note has been prepared by the Research and Policy Advocacy Unit of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Sri Lanka as a part of its Public Policy Dialogue Programme. A similar research papers could be viewed by visiting [www.blog.fccisl.lk](http://www.blog.fccisl.lk). Your comments are welcome to [kulatunga@fccisl.lk](mailto:kulatunga@fccisl.lk))*





announced by Ministry of Environment and Forests (National Parks, Hunting and Wild Life General Directorate).

### 3 .Winter Sports

- The high altitude mountains of Turkey have made the country an important centre for winter tourism, and skiing is becoming increasingly popular.



### 4. Faith Tourism

- Turkey is one of the richest countries of the world in terms of ancient civilizations and places, belonging to three divine religions.



In Turkey, the region containing Tarsus, Hatay, Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa and Mardin has unique properties in the field of faith tourism. This 600 km line between Tarsus and Mardin is named as "Belief Tourism Corridor" in the study "Turkey Tourism Strategy 2023" prepared by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

5. Silk Road - Silk Road, beyond being a commercial road connecting Asia to Europe, is holding the signs of cultures, religions and races, who lived in the region for 2000 years, and serves an extraordinary history and cultural wealth.

6. Thermal Resorts - Because of Turkey's location on top of a major geothermal belt, it is among in the top seven countries in the world for quality and quantity of thermal springs which are over 1.000, with temperatures ranging from 20°C to 110°C. Most are in the Marmara and Aegean regions and because of their proximity to popular travel destinations such as Istanbul, Izmir, Pamukkale and Marmaris, public transport is easy.



7. Congress Tourism - History and cultural heritage, Turkey is a door of amazing possibilities world. Turkey is a magnificent place for meetings, incentive

and congresses where Europe and Asia meets. Turkey is submitting richness of first class hotel, resort and conference facilities, easy transportation to main cities of the world, besides the beautiful decorations and unique panoramic attraction. A perfect climate and lesser cost advantages compared to alternative destinations are added to all of these.

Turkey has all kinds of equipment for organizing all kinds and sized of meetings, incentive and conference with appropriate comfort and style today. Traditional Turkish hospitality, high quality national food and wines, endless

amusement and voyage possibilities are the guaranties of echoing success of all congressound to be organized in Turkey.

8. Golf- In recent years, as golf courses with international standards have opened up, Turkey has become an elite golfing centre where players from around the world can meet in an environment of quality and prestige. Especially the area of Belek, 30km east of Antalya, where, there is a potential for golf tourism with the unique bonus of the cultural, historical and natural sightseeing of the region. Top-class courses are also being planned for Istanbul, Ankara and Mugla.

9. Yachting - The azure waters of the Mediterranean, Aegean, Marmara and Black Sea surrounding Turkey from south, to west and north, making a treasure chest of coves, inlets, bays and beaches in which yachtsmen can choose a different and private anchorage



each night. Sailing in Turkey also allows visitors to experience the hospitality of the people in the coastal villages and towns. The tempered winds blowing from west and northwest make the long summers ideal for yachting.

10. Ornithology - Total number of bird species within Turkey is equal to the bird species within whole of the Europe and it is situated at bird immigration roads. Bird observation stations and observation towers are established within important marshes of our country (Manyas, İzmir, Göksu Deltası etc.). Important passing points of bird immigrations,



seen especially during autumn and spring months within our country, Istanbul and Çanakkale Straits, Eastern Mediterranean (Adana, Hatay, Gaziantep) and North East Anatolia (Artvin, Rize, Kars).

11. Botanic - Various geographic characteristics, climate variety, caused by geographical differences, being a natural bridge between three continents, caused Anatolia Peninsula to have a rarely encountered vegetation in the world. While vegetation number, present in all along Europe is a total of 12.000, this figure is 9.000 in Turkey.

12. Spelunking - With an approximate number of 40.000 caves and caverns present, our country is like a 'paradise of caverns' when compared to other countries. An important geologic - geomorphologic fact in the formation of caverns is karstification (karstic fields) and this karstification is present in Western and Central Taurus Mountains (Muğla, Antalya, Isparta, Burdur, Konya, Karaman, İçel and Adana) of our country. The exact number of caves investigated and documented by all local and foreign cave explorers is 800 so far.



13. Highlands - The highlands have much to offer; the fresh clean air of an undefiled environment, crystal clear streams, a refreshing coolness that is a relief from the sweltering heat during the hottest summer days, views of enchanting beauty, fruit and vegetables grown without hormones and ripen on the vine slowly and naturally, milk and meat products of animals pastured in the most natural environments.



14. Air Sports - Turkey is a country which should be discovered by fond of air sports such as Paragliding , Glider, Parachute and Balloon.

15. Mountaineering - Turkey presents to mountains lovers with an incredible variety of interesting climbing opportunities that are sure to satisfy the most demanding hikers, climbers, and winter sports fans. In Turkey, mountains come in all sizes, geo-morphological and tectonic structures and boast abundant wildlife and forests teeming with diverse flora and fauna. Every year thousands of tourists, from all over the world come to Turkey for winter sports (especially skiing), mountains climbing and hiking.

16. Rafting - Turkey, with its rich natural resources and hundreds of rivers, provides great opportunities for water sports like rafting, canoeing and water-skiing, while always respecting the cultural, historical and environmental qualities of the country. The most famous is the River Coruh, reputed internationally as one of the fastest flowing in the world, and venue of the 4th World Water Sports Championships in 1993 which hosted 300 competitors from 28 countries.

17. Underwater Diving - Within the seas of Turkey, divers can discover a fascinating submerged world, from underwater caverns to sunken ships and even the remains of ancient cities. The only areas prohibited from diving are military zones, those conducting scientific research and areas under protection.



18. Health Tourism - Deriving a considerable amount of revenues from millions of tourists every year, Turkey has now become an important country in health tourism as well. A growing number of patients from around the world prefer the private health institutions in Turkey. Surgical operations performed by the world renowned Turkish surgeons with modern methods cost much less than those performed in Europe and the USA. 500 thousand tourists come to Turkey for health tourism every year.

Source - The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB)

## Hotel occupancy reaches 100% in Tbilisi

The tourism sector in Georgia is full of opportunities. The country's attractions range from the 5,000 metres high snow-capped mountains of the Caucasus range to the sub-tropical lushness of the Black Sea, via gentle Tuscany-like vineyards in Kakheti and healthy hot thermal waters. Georgia used to be the Soviet Union's holiday spot of choice. Now, global demand for new, unspoiled destinations is putting the country back on the world tourism map.

"Georgia can offer nine climate zones, the nature is so diverse that it can match the desire of a large number of travelers looking for places off the beaten track," says Vera Kobalia, Georgia's Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development."

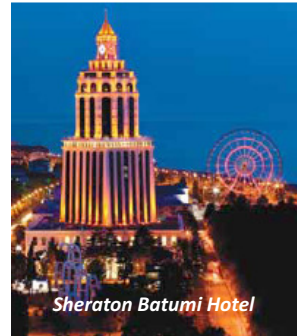
The government is confident that new resorts and intensive marketing will unleash the sector's potential, therefore setting ambitious targets: 5 million foreign tourists should visit the country by 2013 which is more the country population itself.

In 2009, more than 1.5 million people visited Georgia, an increase of 16% compared to 2008. 64.3% of these visitors live in CIS countries. The World Economic Forum's first annual Travel and Tourism Competitiveness report ranked Georgia as the most competitive tourism destination country in the region and it ranked first among 124 countries in respect of the simplicity of visa requirements. Between January and April 2001 675,000 tourists visited Georgia, up 43% from the 470,000 visitors in the same period in 2010.

Keti Bochorishvili, head of the Georgian National Investment Agency (GNIA), the arm of the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia which supports, publicizes and promotes Georgian businesses at home and overseas, believes the time is ripe for foreign investment in tourism.

"Georgia has lots to offer to tourists seeking unspoiled nature and quality service, and the numbers shows a growing interest from international travelers" – she says, "We can also propose a very attractive policy for investors, a friendly environment for foreign businesses to come and invest."

Tourism in Georgia benefits from an earlier wave of international and domestic investment, which reached \$1 billion in 2007 and funded new resorts and Tbilisi's state of the art airport.



Sheraton Batumi Hotel



### Anaklia, the Black Sea gem-to-be

Alberto Domingo Cabo, the well-known Spanish architect, fell in love with Anaklia on his first visit in 2009.

Continued on page 10

## Hotel Occupancy

... Continued from page 9



“The coast is spectacularly beautiful. The landscape, the Inguri River, the comfortable temperature and the sunlight in the region were an inspiration for me,” says the Valencia-based Spaniard who designed the seafront promenade of the town that will become the next must-see attraction on the Black Sea.

In Anaklia, though, the boulevard is just the beginning, as Georgia’s mission to make the resort a flourishing tourist haven is well underway. The construction of hotels in the Anaklia Free Tourism Zone (FTZ) will start soon with the resort ready to welcome big number of holidaymakers in the summer of 2012. Three hotels are already operating in Anaklia and this summer tourists will be able to spend unforgettable holidays on the Black Sea.

The FTZs offer highly desirable incentives: free land, free hotel master plans, and exemption from income and property taxes for 15 years. They also provide connections to all basic utilities, such as gas, electricity and water, as well as critical infrastructure such as new roads.

GNIA already registered a similar “strong interest” from Georgian and foreign investors in Anaklia. “At first, we will select five projects, with a total investment volume of around \$ 40 or 50 million,” director Bochorishvili says.

Anaklia is bound to follow the example of Batumi, just 80 kilometres south. The pearl of the Black Sea, with its historic buildings and its beautiful Belle Époque quarter, is living a new renaissance. The four-mile seaside promenade shows a stunning view over the Black sea, a host of up-market restaurants and nightclubs are buzzing with tourists, while luxury hotels are mushrooming.

Turkish businessman Hayri Dogan is among those international investors who say that betting money on Georgia’s hotels is a good long-term investment. The founder of Eurasia, a construction company, Dogan is optimistic about the future of the hotel sector in the country.

“Anaklia is considered one of the most tourist-friendly sea resorts in Georgia in terms of climate, –Dogan explains. “It also offers easy access and modern infrastructure including the planned new Anaklia-Poti Highway and the Anaklia Airport, which is only 15 minutes away from the resort.” All year-round skiing in nearby Mestia is only a short flight away. An exclusive yacht club in Anaklia is another present from the government.

### Rooms, rooms, and more rooms

Tourists need somewhere to stay. Georgia’s hotels are getting crowded. In Tbilisi, high-end hotels with over one hundred rooms reached 100% occupancy in May according

to STR global, a US-based research firm that specializes in hotel benchmarking reports and analysis for the hospitality markets worldwide.

“The data show why Georgia needs to focus on the development of tourism infrastructure as the number of international travelers in the country is increasing by 35-37% annually,” says Vera Kobalia, the Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development.

In this direction, GNIA has developed the Hotel Investment Initiative, a project aimed at supporting potential investors in developing further the tourism industry in Georgia.

The multi-agency project offers cutting-edge market research, advice on market entry, assistance in establishing a company, local partner search and introduction to business leaders and government authorities.

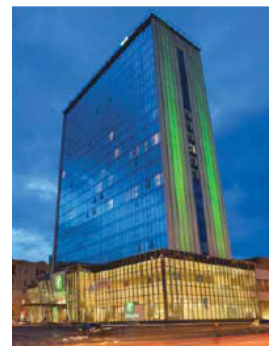
Numbers show a thriving trend in Georgia. The industry revenues grew at an annualized rate of 49.7% between 2005 and 2008, for a total growth of 236%; the hotel fixed assets increased by 45.6% between 2007 and 2009 and the hotel room demand grew by 10% annually between 2006 and 2008. “Georgia can offer high standards of service in line with European hotels combined with a unique, and unspoiled, environment.”

The global financial crisis hit seriously the industry which registered a 4.7% contraction, but in Georgia the tourism revenues expanded by 0.5%. In 2010 occupancy rates increased 50% over 2009.

Georgian hotel investors have begun to attract global franchising operators in the last two years. In 2009, there were five franchises operating in Georgia, such as the Marriott, Sheraton and Radisson Blu. One more – the 4-star Holiday Inn – started business in 2010. In March, property mogul Donald Trump signed an agreement with Georgia’s Silk Road Group, one of the largest private investment companies in the South Caucasus region, to build Trump towers in the capital Tbilisi and the resort town of Batumi. GNIA forecasts that by 2014, up to 12 international hotel brands will be present in Georgia.

In the Black sea coastal Adjara region, in Batumi, it is expected that global brands such as Kempinski, Hyatt, Hilton and Ritz-Carlton will start operating over the next five years. The Sheraton, Adjara’s first internationally-branded 5-star hotel, opened in June 2010 and in July 2011 ribbons will be cut at Radisson Blu. Presently there are more than 120 hotels in the Adjara region.

Currently there are almost 400 hotels, guesthouses and family houses across the country, for a total of 10,000 rooms. As the demand shifts from focusing on “price and budget” to “value and quality”, Georgia is ready for new hotels, especially in the 2 – 4 star segments. In terms of hotel types, there is a significant demand for traditional; boutique and designed, budget concept, apartment-style hotels and resort complexes. ❁



Source - Issue #4, Georgian National Investment Agency Newsletter

# Ecotourism offering a feast of opportunities in Asia

By Karl Malakunas, AFP

PUERTO PRINCESA, Philippines--Philippine fisherman Abner Abrigo used to enjoy feasting on dolphins and turtles until he realized they were more valuable as tourist attractions.

The wiry 28-year-old said eating dolphin "adobo" style had been his top choice -- a reference to the Spanish-inspired cooking of meat in a thick broth of soya sauce, vinegar and garlic that is popular among all Filipinos.

Now, Abrigo and others from a small fishing community on the dazzling western Philippine island of Palawan help to take visitors dolphin watching.

"The extra money from the dolphin watching makes a big difference to our livelihoods," Abrigo told AFP from a dock in Palawan's capital, Puerto Princesa.

Across Asia, similar types of micro-businesses are offering local communities financial incentives to protect their environments as they take advantage of the region's small but growing "ecotourism" industry.

Members of the ethnic Qiang minority in mountainous southwest China are selling meals made from organic produce to visitors, while in Indonesia locals are taking tourists from rainforest eco-lodges to meet endangered orangutans.

The travel industry and governments are also responding to the rising demand for "green" travel, with Cambodia recently becoming the first Southeast Asian nation to commit to the Global Sustainable Tourism Council's principles.

On the Internet, travellers have a myriad of choices from tour operators promoting "sustainable" holidays, including offers to buy carbon credits to offset air travel and to stay at high-end

resorts that embrace green practices.

"Ecotourism is a still a niche market but interest is rising," John Koldowski, deputy chief executive officer of the Pacific Asia Travel Association, told AFP.

"This is driven by an awareness generally in the environment and being green and sustainable, but also in something that's becoming in short supply in the world -- peace, quiet and solitude."

Government leaders, local communities and non-government organizations on Palawan, one of the Philippines' most beautiful and biologically diverse islands, have been among the most enthusiastic adopters of eco-tourism in Asia.

Abrigo's fishing community -- as part of an ecotourism program called Bayanijuan run by the Puerto Princesa government and Philippine media company ABS-CBN -- has run dolphin and whale watching tours for about two years.

Abrigo and some of his neighbors act as spotters for the tourist vessel while out fishing themselves in their small outrigger boats.

If they are the spotter that finds the dolphins or whales for the tourist boat, they get paid 25 pesos (about 60 cents) for each passenger on the boat.

"Sometimes there are more than 20 people on the boat ... jackpot," Abrigo said with a smile.

While Abrigo still needs to fish to guarantee enough money to survive, other former fishermen elsewhere on Palawan have given up their old jobs



altogether to cater for the growing number of tourists.

Edwin Bermejo, 43, confessed to having performed trawl net fishing in Puerto Princesa's stunning Honda Bay for many years.

Trawl net and other destructive methods of fishing, such as using dynamite and cyanide, have ruined many of Palawan's precious coral reefs over the past few decades.

"We didn't understand the results of what we were doing," he said.

But as fish catches started to dry up and tourists began to arrive in the 1990s, Bermejo said he and other fishermen around Honda Bay realized they needed to change their way of living if they were to survive.

With the help of local non-government organizations and more recently the Bayanijuan program, they turned their fishing vessels into island hopping boats.

They also worked with the Puerto Princesa government to enforce a ban on destructive fishing practices, doing volunteer patrols and reporting any offences to authorities.

"Our fish stocks have slowly recovered," Bermejo told AFP from aboard a boat in Honda Bay that takes tourists to the beaches of some of the area's tiny islands, as well as snorkeling and diving in the remaining coral reefs.

His community association is now intending to take out a loan to nearly double its current fleet of 66 boats in an effort to meet a recent boom in tourist numbers.

"This would never have happened if we kept on fishing the way we did," Bermejo said.

The mayor of Puerto Princesa, Edward Hagedorn, is one of the driving forces behind the ecotourism effort, according to many environment activists on Palawan who regard him as an ally in their campaign to protect its ecosystems.

Hagedorn said that after first becoming mayor in 1992 he banned mining, logging and factories, confident that in the long-run more jobs would be created by preserving the area's natural wonders and attracting tourists.

Tourist numbers to Puerto Princesa jumped from 12,000 in 1992 to 425,000 in 2010, and many more are expected as the area gains global fame -- National Geographic named Palawan as one of its top-20 destinations this year.

"Now with the number of visitors rising, it's giving more and more income to the people. But if we allowed mining and logging ... those jobs would have been just temporary," he said.

For Anthony Cuvinar, 27, the tourism boom has turned him from a struggling handicraft maker into a boatman and tour guide for a fireflies tour who can now earn up to 20,000 pesos (US\$470) a month -- a good wage in local terms.

But when asked while paddling his kayak along the Iwahig River at dusk what he liked most about his job, Cuvinar did not mention the money.

"When I got into this, I learned to love nature and I enjoy helping other people to understand the importance of nature," he said, as nine egrets flew past in V formation.

Source -- AFP, March 28, 2011



# Singapore Boutique Hotelier Turns Wrecks Into Gems

By Bernice Han, AFP

They may look like wrecks to most people, but to Singaporean hotelier Loh Lik Peng creaking warehouses or unused school buildings can be architectural gems just waiting to be polished.

The former lawyer is Singapore's boutique-hotel king, and he is credited with spearheading a trend to create intimate accommodation that is both hip and historic in a city dominated by gleaming skyscrapers.

"I like finding old buildings that are a bit of a wreck," Loh told AFP in the lobby of his newest hotel, Wanderlust, which opened last year in Singapore's Little India district.

"For me, it's a huge amount of fun and it always makes my heart beat faster when I see a beautiful, old building and it's available to restore, and I imagine what I could do with it."

Loh's move into the hotel industry would never have happened if not for his previous stint as a lawyer winding up companies that had collapsed after the Asian financial crisis in the late 1990s.

It was during one of his assignments that he came across a derelict three-storey shophouse that generated little buyer interest because of the slump and the fact that it was located in a red-light district in Chinatown.

But Loh saw an opportunity.

"I realised there were no interesting, cool, little boutique hotels at that time," said the 38-year-old. "They were all large, chain hotels and weren't that different from each other."

Against warnings from well-meaning friends, Loh bought the site for Sg\$3.5 million (\$2.76 million) in 2001 with financial support from his parents, both doctors.

After a complete refurbishment, he renamed the building Hotel 1929 after the year it was built and opened its doors to the first guest in February 2003.

Customers were wowed by the 32 individually-styled rooms done in what Loh called "nouveau chic" decor, with black and white photos of Singapore in the early 20th century lining its corridors.

Janet Greasley, an English retiree from Nottingham, stayed at the hotel in January this year and liked what she saw.

"I did connect the fact that the decor and the name of the hotel were linked and liked it," Greasley told AFP.

"Too often developers throw out what they call 'dated things' unless they are over 100 years old," she said.

The success of Hotel 1929 came as a surprise even to Loh but he realised he had tapped into something worth pursuing.

Three years later, he opened the New Majestic Hotel across the street from Hotel 1929.

"I had never kind of imagined that it would be that successful," said the accidental hotelier, who has not donned a tie to work since the day he gave up his legal career in 2002.

"I would say at that time ignorance was bliss, I didn't really know what I was getting myself into and I had no idea whether people would respond to it."

Trendy boutique hotels in Singapore do not come cheap, though.

An online check showed the New Majestic's published rate for a basic room averages Sg\$280 (\$220) a night, while at the nearby four-star Amara hotel it is Sg\$260 (\$204).

By comparison, the best available online rate at the Singapore Marriott Hotel for a night's stay is Sg\$450 (\$354) while the Hilton Singapore charges from Sg\$409.40 (\$322) onwards.

Loh expanded overseas last year, opening The Waterhouse in Shanghai and the Townhall Hotel and Apartments in London, both of them in heritage buildings.

The Shanghai property is a former warehouse brought to his attention by a friend while one of his staff told him about the building in London's Bethnal Green district.

"I really only work with conservation projects and because you work with old buildings, this is how it is," said Loh.

"You can't walk around and say 'I want to do a project' and then find the building, so it is largely opportunistic."

The four-storey, 29-room Wanderlust hotel in Singapore's ethnic Indian enclave is housed in a former school building.

In the lobby, a pair of huge old-fashioned barber chairs from the 1930s sit alongside a dental surgeon's lamp, all from Loh's personal collection.

Guests can rest on handmade chairs made from recycled road signs when they're not in rooms that can resemble a space rocket with friendly aliens or reflect neon themes inspired by the Beatles' hit song "Yellow Submarine" or "Purple Rain" by Prince.

Johan Svanstrom, Asia-Pacific managing director with booking website Hotels.com, says boutique hotels appeal to well-travelled guests who want something different.

"A boutique hotel has now become a unique experience," Svanstrom told AFP.

"What people like about boutique hotels is that they feel closer to the staff. It is not mass production."



Source - AFP News, Mar 25, 2011

# Travel Industry Looks to China, India, Brazil for Boom

by Jim Mannion, AFP

China, India and Brazil are poised to fuel an explosion in international tourism in the coming years, showering money and jobs on countries ready for it, and trouble for those that aren't, industry leaders say.

With an estimated two billion new middle class consumers expected to come into the markets from those emerging powerhouses over the next two decades, the travel industry sees a potential gold rush ahead.

"The growth of China outbound travel is moving at a huge pace -- it is about 20 percent increase every year. And the number of outbound Chinese travelers hit 58 million last year," said David Scowsill, CEO of the World Travel and Tourism Council, an industry promotion group.

"And if you look ahead, (with about) 1.6 billion coming out of China and India, they are a huge amount of people coming in with money to burn," he told reporters.

The impact of that coming wave is a top topic at a three-day global travel and tourism summit that opens here Tuesday, drawing CEOs from many of the world's largest travel companies and top tourism officials.

The United States is sending Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood and Valerie Jarrett, a top advisor to President Barack Obama. Mexico's President Fernando Calderon is the guest of honor.

Barriers to travel, technological innovation and change, body blows to

tourism in quake-struck Japan and the turbulent Middle East also are on the agenda here.

But organizers say they want to get government officials and industry leaders thinking about what the arrival of the Chinese, Brazilians, Indians and others from newly affluent countries will mean for their national economies and the international travel business.



"We'll ask the attendees whether they are ready to absorb that level of growth," said Scowsill.

"Are governments ready with infrastructure build? Are private investors ready to put the investment in, and generally speaking are we ready to absorb that level of growth?"

Roger Dow, of the US Travel Association, calls the conflict between the projected surge in demand and lagging infrastructure "a real chicken and egg."

"As we build this travel, which will happen, we'll also have to take a real hard look at our infrastructure, our next generation systems for airports, and adding airport capacity," he said.

Countries that haven't caught up in time are likely to be cursed with fun-killing bottlenecks and overcrowding as millions of new tourists pour through the global travel system.

Ironically, said Scowsill, it is "the developed market leaders that don't fully understand the impact of tourism. They kind of take it for granted in a way that we do not see in some of the developing world."

The United States, for instance, has seen little growth over the past decade in the number of long-haul travelers it

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## CACCI Invites Members to Join the Asian Tourism Council

The Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CACCI) is inviting all Primary Members to nominate representatives to the Asian Council on Tourism, which is one of the Product and Service Councils organized under the CACCI umbrella.

The Product and Service Councils (PSCs) have been established with the primary aim of promoting greater business interaction among CACCI members who are in the same product or service line. Membership in the PSCs will provide businessmen regular platform for: (a) networking; (b) identifying and addressing issues affecting their respective sectors; (c) finding solutions to common problems; and working out specific programs to accelerate regional cooperation, particularly in the area of trade, investment, technology transfer, capital flow, and the exchange of information; and exploring opportunities for business cooperation and joint venture, and initiating and completing business deals.

The strength of any organization depends on the quality of its officers and members. Hence, in identifying possible representatives for the Asian Council on Tourism (ACT), Primary Members are requested to consider candidates with the following qualifications: (a) a strong interest and commitment to actively participate in the programs and projects of ACT; (b) willing and financially capable to travel at least once a year to attend meetings of ACT; (c) willing to help in setting the general direction of the ACT and in identifying its activities to achieve its objective of promoting cooperation among its members; (d) in a position to serve as an effective liaison between ACT and the pertinent sectoral or trade associations in his/her country; (e) proficient in English; and (f) eager and willing to render voluntary work for ACT.

For further information, please contact Ms. Wendy Yang, CACCI Senior Officer, at [wendy.yang@cacci.org.tw](mailto:wendy.yang@cacci.org.tw) or Tel (886 2) 2725 5663/4.

## Travel Industry

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receives, at a time when the rest of the world has seen an increase of about 40 percent.

Nevertheless, Commerce Department figures out Tuesday show a strong US rebound in travel and tourism-related exports in 2010 to 134.4 billion dollars, after a record 21 billion dollar, or 15 percent, drop in 2009.

The biggest increase, 18 percent, came from the Asia-Pacific region. Visitors from China, Singapore, and South Korea increased their tourism related spending by 39 percent, 31 percent and 30 percent, respectively.

In the view of the travel industry, the US numbers would be much higher were it not for a system for granting US visas that is so gratingly slow that it is driving away visitors.

After the September 11, 2001 attacks, the United States instituted requirements that every visa applicant be interviewed in person by a consular level officer.

"The end result is we have seen visa wait times for interviews go up to 100, 120 days in Brazil and China," he said.

"In Brazil, there are only four places you can go for a visa interview. In China there are five. So the combination of the huge population, the huge demand, and the need for face-to-face interviews in very few places is what has created the problem," he said.

The USTA released a report last week calling for an overhaul of the system.

It proposed hiring 400 more consular interviewers, allowing interviews to be done by videoconference, and exploring visa waivers with countries like Brazil.

"The Brazilian economy is soaring and people want to spend money, they want to travel. And the two highest groups that spend money are the Chinese and the Brazilian travelers. They outpace other travelers in the world by 25 to 50 percent per person," said Dow. ❀

Source – AFP, May 18, 2011

## News Bits

### Philippines to launch Bataan Nuclear Power Plant as tourist site

Philippine tourism officials have revealed plans of turning an unused nuclear power plant into a tourist attraction.

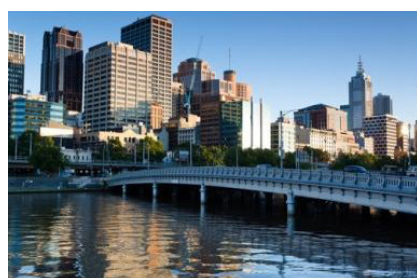
Ronald Tiotuico, regional director, Department of Tourism, Philippines, was quoted in eTurbo News as having said that hopefully the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant would serve to warn the global community of the fallout disaster that struck people in the Three Mile Island, Chernobyl, and Fukushima. The plant will be one of the stops on a tour that includes other historical sites and beach resorts.

The Bataan Nuclear Power Plant, completed in 1984 and which cost US\$2.3-billion to be built, was never put to use. It was constructed during Ferdinand Marcos' presidency but was deemed unsafe when Corazon Aquino became president in 1986, due to its location near earthquake faults and an active volcano.

Source – PATA



### Australia to ease visa regulations



The Australian government's decision to review a range of visa classifications is deemed to boost tourism to the country.

Felicia Mariani, managing director, Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC) was quoted in eTravel Blackboard Australia as having said that there were currently too many roadblocks to Australia as a tourist destination, including the rising Australian dollar, increasing fuel surcharges, and the Passenger Movement Charge along with the cost and complexity of getting a visa. Therefore, the ATEC welcomes any changes the government could make that would ease this burden for visitors. Mariani added that the Australian government's move to simplify their visa categories would create an environment that made Australia more competitive on the global stage.

Source – PATA

### Asia Pacific hotels perform well

According to recent data released by STR Global, hotels in the Asia Pacific region experienced positive results during March 2011 in three key performance metrics

Although occupancy fell 3.5% to 66.5%, average daily rate (ADR) increased 13.8% to US\$144.04, while the revenue per available room (RevPAR) jumped 9.9% to US\$95.77. In year-on-year comparisons, Bangkok, Thailand, increased 10% in occupancy to 67.8%, reporting the largest increase in that metric, followed by Jakarta, Indonesia, with a six per cent increase to 71.9%.

Five markets experienced double-digit ADR increases, namely, Hong Kong, (+28.2%); Jakarta (+14.5%); Bali (+12.8%); Beijing, China (+10.3 %); and Seoul, South Korea (+10%). Hong Kong jumped 33.2% in RevPAR, followed by Jakarta with a 21.4% increase.



Source – PATA



## UAE and Vietnam seal deal on open skies agreement



The United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Vietnam have signed an open skies agreement.

The deal was confirmed by the UAE's General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA). According to a report in Travel Daily Middle East, the deal provides for any number and combination of routes to be developed between the countries. The agreement applies to all passenger and cargo airlines that are based in both countries.

Source – PATA

## India introduces interstate tourism

Several Indian states have entered into a mutual agreement to promote interstate tourism.

Gujarat has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Rajasthan and Karnataka for interstate tourists as well as Punjab which has large number of non-resident Indian (NRI) visitors and tourists. The agreement between the states indicates that the states would mutually market their accommodations and tourism packages. Vipul Mitra, tourism secretary, Gujarat Tourism Department, was quoted in eTurbo News as having said that the MOUs will help towards mutual promotion of tourism, showcasing each other's cultural heritage to the tourists and facilitating inbound travel into the respective states.



Source – PATA

## Thailand to revive tourism in Koh Samui



The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) boosts the promotion of Koh Samui to revive tourism on the island after the devastating March 26-28 flooding.

As the situation has returned to normal in Koh Samui, TAT spearheaded a clean-up campaign over the weekend in cooperation with the Samui Municipality, the Samui Tourism Promotion Association, the Thai Hotel Association South-East Chapter, and regional carrier Bangkok Airways. According to a report in eTurbo News, TAT has also organised a travel fair called 'Amazing Coasts South' which will be held on May 26-28, 2011 at Queen Sirikit National Convention Centre. The fair will feature special offers for travel to the island. TAT is

also set to launch a new website, [www.travelsouththailand.com](http://www.travelsouththailand.com), which will list routes, locations, and tourism activities in both affected and unaffected areas in the south.

Source – PATA

## Competency certificate required for tourism professionals in Indonesia

A new law to be implemented in Indonesia this year requires tourism-related businesses to consider a candidate's competency certificate during recruitment.



The Tourism Law No 10/2009 stipulates that all tourism professionals in Indonesia must have competency certificates. The government regulation that backs up this new law is now in the process of being finalised and will be implemented this year. This new law is aimed to prepare Indonesia for the ASEAN Economic Community that is designed to turn the region into a single market by 2015. ASEAN has agreed on a Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Tourism Professionals and an ASEAN Common Competency Standard Framework for Tourism Professionals.

This proposed law has however raised concerns for members of the tourism industry in Indonesia. Carla Parengkuan, executive director, Indonesia Hotel and Restaurant Association, was quoted in TTG Asia as having said that to make the certification work, they needed the government, together with the industry associations, to set up a salary range for every competency standard.

Source – PATA

## Philippines to attract more Russian and Indian tourists

The Department of Tourism of the Philippines is set to implement an aggressive campaign to attract more foreign tourists, particularly from Korea, China, Japan, and emerging markets like Russia and India.



Philippine Airlines' new direct flight to New Delhi is expected to increase tourists from India. Alberto Lim, secretary, Department of Tourism, Philippines, was quoted in eTurbo News as having said that tourism revenues accounted for six per cent of the country's gross domestic product for 2010. Lim added that the government's pursuit of an open civil aviation industry signals that the Philippines is open for business.

The tourist arrivals recorded in the first two months of 2011 has grown 18% year-on-year to 670,000.

Source – PATA