



Message from the Chairman



As Chairman of the Asian Council on Tourism, I am pleased to present the 21st issue of the CACCI Tourism Newsletter to all our colleagues in the tourism sector.

This issue highlights the trends, the latest news and interesting reports on tourism in the Asia-Pacific region. 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.

This Council has served as 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



Vietnam Tourism Industry Posts Strong Growth



PHOTO from Viet Nam News/Asia News Network

Viet Nam News/Asia News Network

In 2018, Vietnam received 15.5 million international tourists, an increase of 19.9 percent over 2017.

The information was announced at a conference on July 10, 2019, where the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (VNAT) released the Tourism Annual Report 2018. The report details the achievements of the tourism industry, VNAT's efforts to develop tourism into a key part of the economy and the outlook of global and regional tourism for the future.

The national tourism industry has made remarkable progress and held a number of events to promote tourism, according to Ha Van Sieu, vice chairman of the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (VNAT).

Siêu praised the industry's results from the first half of 2019.

"There were estimated to be 45.5 million domestic tourists in the first half of 2019," he said. "The income from tourism was VND338.2 billion (US\$14.6 million)."

The number of international visitors to Vietnam in the first half of 2019 hit 8.5 million, 7.5 per cent more than in the first half of 2018.

In the second half of 2019, VNAT plans to organize promotional activities to help meet goals set for the year and work with other agencies to hold the International Travel Expo in HCM City, the National Tourism Year in the coastal province of Khanh Hoa and the Vietnam International Travel Mart in Can Tho. The development of international harbors and airports has helped boost national tourism," Siêu said.

"The number of foreign tourists arriving in Vietnam by cruise ship has seen strong growth in accordance with the potential of sea tourism and the long, beautiful coastline of the country."

Two international cruise ships arrived in HCM City and Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province early this month, bringing more than 7,000 passengers to Vietnam.

Siêu also pointed out some shortcomings, like waste management in tourist areas, security and safety at festivals and service during the high season.

We wanted to release the report sooner but it takes six months to gather information and statistics of the regional and international tourism industries," he said.

China sent more tourists than any other country with nearly 5 million visitors. It was followed by South Korea, Japan, Chinese Taipei and the US.

VNAT estimated there are more than 24,000 tour guides working in English, Chinese, French, Japanese, Russian, German and other languages.

There are a total of 28,000 accommodations with some 550,000 rooms nationwide.

The Vietnam Tourism Awards 2019 will be held on July 15 in Hanoi to honor individuals and organizations that have showed great devotion to developing tourism.

Initiated in 1999, the annual awards have contributed to enhancing the quality of tourism products and services and encouraging travel agencies, domestic tour operators, hotels and hospitality service providers in the country.

INQUIRER.net

Six Ministries Aim to Double Taiwan's Medical Tourism in Four Years

Taiwan's Ministry of Health and Welfare (MOHW) pointed out that the government intends to strengthen Taiwan's international medical output value by focusing on health examinations and cosmetology tourism. Taking the lead, a Taiwan Task Force on Medical Travel (TTFMT) was established with six other major ministries, including the Tourism Bureau, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the National Immigration Agency, to design a one-stop program based on clinics to attract more global tourists. The task force aims to double the output value of the industry up to NT\$35 billion in four years.

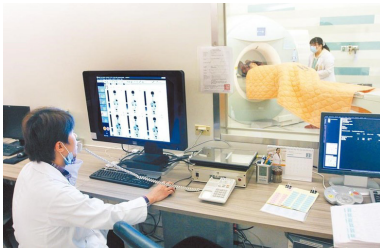
TTFMT held a preparatory meeting in May 2019. In mid-June, the first meeting will be held by Jui-Yuan Hsueh, the MOHW Administrative Deputy Minister. The meeting will focus on extending the visa-free period for specific countries, the establishment of foreign offices, promotion, customer attraction, clinic inventory, communication, and schedule design. Plans will be officially launched by as early as the third quarter.

Taiwan's international medical care used to focus on outpatient and inpatient services. The market continues to grow, from 287,000 patients in 2016 to 414,000 in 2018, an impressive increase of 44%. The output value increased by 22% in the past three years, reaching NT\$17.14 billion in 2018.

However, only 20% of the output value comes from cosmetology and health examination programs. Taiwan has great advantages in this market, particularly in language abilities when compared to Japan and South Korea, in technological skills when compared to Thailand, and in pricing when compared to Singapore.

MOHW said that it would cooperate with the Medical Association as soon as possible to sort the list of certified clinics and procedures ranging from health examinations to cosmetic medicine. Language abilities of clinics will also be evaluated, in addition to their services and processes. The preparatory work is roughly estimated to be completed in two to three months.

Cosmetic medicine and health examinations both require careful communications with customers. Therefore the



first stage will target ethnic Chinese in Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar, Malaysia, and other countries where language similarity with Taiwan exists. The task force will entrust Taiwan External Trade Development Council (TAITRA)

with setting up offices in these countries, attracting customers through Taiwan Expos and medical exhibitions, assessing current demand for services, such as a one-stop service encompassing preoperative communication, recovery, sightseeing, and follow-up reports after patients return home.

The second stage will focus on medical tourists from Europe and the Americas of over 4 hours of flight time, and potential customers would be referred by private insurance companies.

In addition to quality health

examinations, Taiwan’s cosmetic medicine is also of high standard and lower price. With the help of TTFMT, the nation intends to increase its share of the cosmetology and health examination markets, providing an engine of growth for its international health care industry and establishing a service value chain for Taiwan’s health care. The goal is to attract streams of international tourists to Taiwan through good and affordable services, where they can see the nation’s vibrance and beauty while becoming healthy and beautiful themselves.

World Bank, ADB make Available \$400 Million in Loans for Tourism Projects

By Ma. Stella F. Arnaldo

The Department of Tourism (DOT) of the Philippines is hoping to tap some \$400 million in official development assistance (ODA) from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank to beef up infrastructure, livelihood and services in key tourism destinations.

This was disclosed by the Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo Puyat in an interview with the BusinessMirror, after a meeting on October 2, 2019 with local government officials, who will help implement the DOT’s new initiative Transforming Communities toward Resilient, Inclusive and Sustainable Tourism or TouRIST program. The meeting on October 2, 2019 also included representatives from the World Bank.

“The TouRIST Program will be a vehicle for us to implement a coordinated effort between the various government organizations and instrumentalities, and realize sustainable tourism development,” she said. Specifically, the program aims to: develop and promote a sustainable tourism industry with active participation of all stakeholders, create an inclusive tourism industry that benefits local communities, and ensure a resilient tourism industry amid threats, according to a briefing paper.

The DOT has proposed to help Bohol, Siargao, Siquijor, Davao City and Samal Island from the World Bank which has made available \$300 million in funds. For the ADB’s \$100-million assistance, the DOT has identified Coron and El Nido, in Palawan as program sites.

The \$400-million assistance will be two separate loan packages to be undertaken by the national government, which will be used to “enhance tourism infrastructure,” explained Romulo Puyat. There will also be a grant component for the “livelihood, disaster risk reduction and crisis management, and tourism policy and regulation [components],” to complement the loans.



World Bank Portfolio and Operations Manager Achim Fock explains the bank’s loan assistance for tourism projects in a meeting with the Department of Tourism and local government officials on Wednesday. At left is WB Task Team leader Lesley Cordero.

She added, “we can keep promoting these destinations, but if they don’t have the proper infrastructure, are unable to manage disasters and crises, or the people don’t benefit from jobs that are tied to the tourism activities in the area, then we are not really uplifting tourism and its targeted beneficiaries.” She said this way, the DOT will have a more “wholistic approach” to tourism development.

Under the National Tourism Development Plan for 2016-2022, the DOT is targeting foreign visitor arrivals to reach 12 million and inbound tourism receipts to hit P922 billion by 2022. Also, it is eyeing 6.5 million in tourism jobs with a 14-percent share of total employment, and the number of poor beneficiaries to rise to 5401,000 also by 2022.

Romulo Puyat said DOT selected the five TouRIST destinations for the World Bank aid because of the rapid increase of tourism demand, potential for future development, lack of financing to address emerging capital investment needs, rich cultural heritage sites and biodiversity, and socio-economic impact for poverty alleviation.

Technical missions to identify the projects to be funded by the World Bank assistance will be conducted in the next three weeks, the DOT chief said. The ADB will be sending a second mission to Palawan in the week of October 7, 2019.

The amount of counterpart funds by the national government and LGUs will be determined only after the technical missions have completed their work. Counterpart funds usually amount between 10 and 20 percent of the cost of ODA.

The DOT and its infrastructure arm, the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority, will provide manpower/administrative support as well as feasibility studies. The LGUs will provide land for the identified projects, manpower, and feasibility studies as well, said Romulo Puyat.

Repayment terms such as maturity and interest rate on the loans have yet to be determined pending the identification of actual projects, but usual World Bank and ADB loans are usually long-gestating and carry non-commercial interest rates. The DOT will still have to submit the proposed projects to be funded by both loans to the National Economic and Development Authority-Investment Coordinating Committee for initial approval.

Local government representatives

who attended the meeting were Siquijor Rep. Jake Vincent Villa, Bohol Gov. Arthur Yap, Surigao Del Norte Gov. Francisco T. Matugas, Siquijor Gov. Zaldy Villa, Davao City chief tourism officer Generose Tecson, and Samal Island city administrator Rose Marie Garde.

DOT's TouRIST program in partnership with the World Bank, along with national line agencies and local governments, is supervised by the Tourism Coordinating Council (TCC). The TCC is

a 25-member body created under Republic Act 9593 (Tourism Act of 2009), which serves as coordinating body for national tourism development efforts, and includes heads of concerned national agencies and government offices, DOT attached agencies, nongovernment organizations, and the private sector-led Tourism Congress of the Philippines.

BusinessMirror

World Tourism Day 2019: Sustainable Travel and the Plight of Wild Animals

Tourism is the third largest export industry in the world after chemicals and fuels. Travelling brings hope, prosperity and understanding to many people all over the world. In 2017, more than 1.2 billion travellers crossed international borders. By 2030, up to 1.8 billion are expected to travel in a single year. As a result, travel and tourism create jobs for over 320 million people and generate 10.4 per cent of the world's gross domestic product. But that's not all: tourism is also one of most talked-about components of an effective wildlife economy.



Photo Credit: Wikipedia

This World Tourism Day, we look at how to enable this powerful global transformative force to contribute to preserving and enriching the environment, rather than causing its destruction. Despite the industry's potential, tourism has also been used unknowingly—at times deliberately—used to facilitate the purchase and trade of illegal wildlife products. Exotic holidays are popular, but so is bringing back souvenirs to remember them. Unfortunately, these souvenirs are often made from illegal animal and plant products. Ivory, turtle and tortoise shell, coral, feathers and many more wildlife products, dead or alive, are popular souvenirs for the millions of tourists who travel abroad each year.

At least 33,000 elephants are killed every year for their ivory—that's roughly one in every 12 elephants. Although most responsible travellers know about the threat facing elephants and would not purchase ivory, dealers have become aware of this and describe their products as "antique". Similarly, rhino horn is reportedly worth more than gold or platinum on the international black market, which is why trafficking is on the rise.

Demand for the rare has fuelled an international poaching and trafficking crisis that is threatening the survival of some of the world's most iconic species and travel destinations. The illegal trade in wildlife is the fourth largest criminal activity after drugs, arms and human trafficking, robbing countries of billions of dollars of their precious natural resources.

Nature-based destinations, including Galapagos Islands, Costa Rica and others, are starting to limit tourism and increase sustainable tourism practices, due to its adverse environmental

impacts. According to the World Bank, nature-based tourism is growing significantly. In 2017, international tourist arrivals in Africa are estimated to have increased by 9 per cent to 63 million visitors, leading to an 8 per cent increase in revenue, representing US\$37 billion.

Consequently, tourism stands to be a huge source for both the protection and threat to endangered wildlife and delicate habitats. The industry must come together to mainstream sustainable wildlife tourism and

play a larger role through regulation and awareness amongst its customers.

Since recognizing the potential of the travel and tourism sector to create positive change, in 2018 over 100 companies have come together through the World Travel and Tourism Council to sign the Buenos Aires Travel and Tourism Declaration on Illegal Trade in Wildlife, a commitment to take a stand against wildlife trafficking. Signatories to the Declaration have agreed to "adopt or encourage the adoption of a zero-tolerance policy regarding illegal trade in wildlife". Since many companies and organizations in the travel and tourism industry share common destinations, travellers, and suppliers, adopting a harmonized policy will help amplify the global impact.

Illegal wildlife souvenirs are difficult to identify, and it is virtually impossible to differentiate between them and sustainably sourced products. Nonetheless, as we celebrate World Tourism Day and ahead of World Wildlife Day 2020, we must think about how we can become responsible travellers and thoughtful, informed consumers.

There are several steps one can take in order to avoid supporting the illegal trade of wildlife products. As consumers, we should ask what the products are made of, where they came from and if it is legal to export them; though seasoned travelers know that scams are prevalent wherever there are tourists.

One can support and promote local craftspeople and their traditions by investing in souvenirs handmade by local artisans. If one suspects or sees any selling of wildlife products, it is important to speak up by going to the local police or inform your

tour operator or agency. When taking part in wildlife tourism trips, help by making sure that the tour is conducted responsibly and respectfully towards the wild animals and plants you are paying hard earned

money to go and see. They are what make many of these places so special.

At this year's (2019) UN General Assembly, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) signed a memorandum of

understanding with the World Travel and Tourism Council to cooperate on sustainable tourism, plastics and wildlife conservation.

UN Environment Programme

Pakistan Offers Tax Holiday for Foreign Investment in Tourism Sector



The government of Pakistan is offering tax holiday for foreign investments in tourism sector in a bid to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

The government has planned to invite foreign investment into the country for establishing tourism zones in potential Northern Areas, Swat, Galiat and Hazara region and Gilgit Baltistan and other tourism zones, Chairman Board of Investment (BOI), Zubair Gilani said.

Gilani said huge foreign investment was expected in tourism sector as government was focusing on building this sector on priority basis.

He said the government intended to diversify tourism by exploiting its various sectors.

“Priority of the government is to boost tourism of diverse fields including religious and faith, adventure, medical and education tourism to promote soft image of the country at international level,” he added.

He said the government would ensure provision of all modern facilities to provide enjoyable and secure environment to tourists, adding that it would also empower local community through engaging them in business activity.

The Chairman BOI said the government would educate and train people working with potential tourist centres to make them valuable employees and also to promote the concept of shared prosperity.

He was of the view that public private partnership and role of local community was imperative to attract domestic as well as foreign tourists.

He said after foreign investment in tourism, economic activities in these areas would increase, which would create more job opportunities.

Gilani said through public private partnership, the government was looking for the privatization of some entities to provide competitiveness for enhancing the capacity to promoting local tourism.

He said for promoting tourism culture through Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), the government was working on World Bank’s (WB) ‘Ease of doing Business’ index, which had improved from 148 to 136 out of totals 180 countries across the globe.

He said promotion of SMEs culture in tourism would play huge role for development of all sort of tourism activities for increasing economic activities in these areas.

He said the BOI had been working on the all major indicators of the EODB for improving the country’s ranking from 136 to 115 in 2019 and unexpectedly below 100 in next couple of

years.

Chairman BOI said that knowledge-based business and economy would be priority of the government to compete with world economies.

He informed that through knowledge-based business and exports “we can promote Pakistan’s hi-tech and innovative export items in competitive international market”.

Khaleej Times

Growth in International Arrivals into Asia Pacific Strong in 2018

Updated data for foreign arrivals into 46 Asia Pacific destinations confirmed the overall continuation of solid growth in 2018, achieving a 7.3% annual increase compared to 2017 and reaching a new record high of nearly 708 million international visitor arrivals (IVAs).

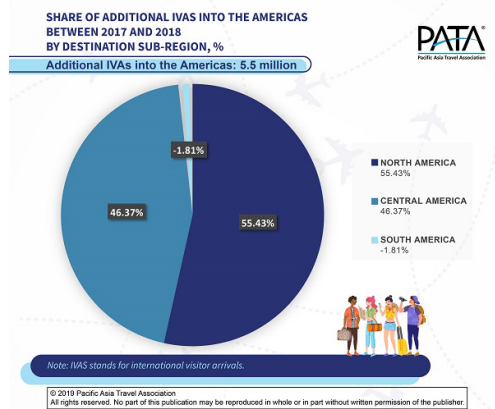
When adjusted for Guam and Hawaii – which appear twice, once as individual destinations and again as inclusions in the USA figures – the Asia Pacific aggregate performance still indicated an year-on-year increase of 7.3% in 2018 with a similar record high of close to 697 million IVAs.

International Inbound Travel 2018

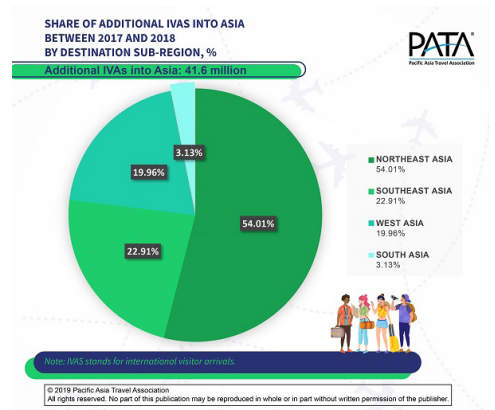
According to the Annual Travel Monitor 2019 Final Edition (ATM) released by the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) today, over the five years between 2014 and 2018, the 46 Asia Pacific destinations covered in the report have collectively seen their IVAs increase by almost 24%, adding more than 136 million additional arrivals to the collective foreign inbound count in the process.



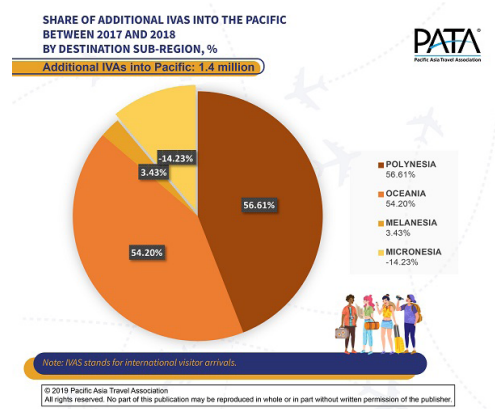
In percentage increase terms between 2017 and 2018, Asia had the strongest annual increase at 8.7%, followed by the Pacific at four percent and the Americas at 3.5%. By annual increase in the absolute volume of foreign arrivals between 2017 and 2018 however, these positions changed somewhat, with Asia receiving close to 41.6 million additional foreign arrivals, followed by the Americas with a gain of over 5.4 million and the Pacific with just over one million additional foreign arrivals received over that period. Within the Americas, North America showed the strongest incremental increase in foreign arrivals between 2017 and 2018, capturing more than 55% of the 5.446 million increase over that period, followed next by Central America.



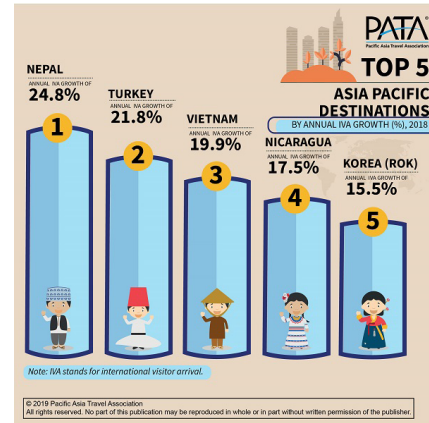
Across Asia it was Northeast Asia in particular that captured the largest proportion of additional foreign arrivals into the region between 2017 and 2018 (figure 2).



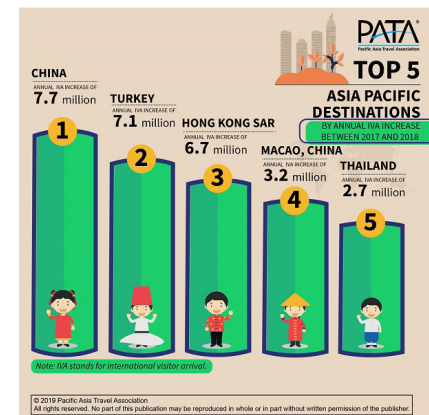
While in the Pacific, Polynesia and Oceania dominated that landscape



At the individual Asia Pacific destination level, destinations with the strongest annual percentage growth rates in 2018 ranked as:



All told, 24% of the 46 destinations covered in this report had annual growth rates in excess of 10% between 2017 and 2018, while 65% grew by five percent or more. For the absolute volume increase between 2017 and 2018, the strongest Asia Pacific performers were ranked as:



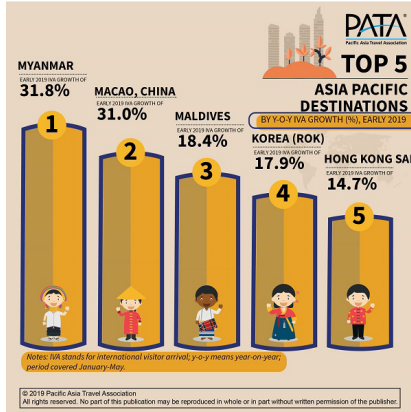
Of the 46 destinations covered in the report, more than a quarter (26%), had annual volume increases of more than one million IVAs each, while close to 37% had more than half a million apiece. Nevertheless, the strong collective performance of Asia Pacific destinations in 2018 appears to be changing into 2019. As PATA CEO Dr. Mario Hardy pointed out that, “Preliminary results for early 2019 show a slight softening in the collective annual increase in foreign arrivals into 37 Asia Pacific destinations, reducing to 6.2% year-to-date, year-on-year. Even so, this growth rate has added almost 17 million additional arrivals to the total inbound count during the first periods of 2019 relative to the same period of last year.” He concluded, “The impacts of various geopolitical and natural changes appear to be affecting the global travel and tourism sector and we expect some significant changes in the Asia Pacific 2019 picture by the end of the year.”

International Inbound Travel: Early 2019

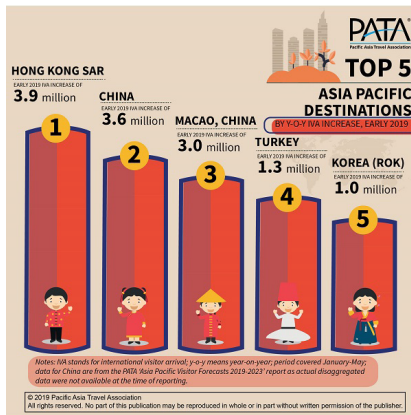
Early 2019 data for foreign arrivals into 37 Asia Pacific destinations shows a general softening of growth relative to the same periods of 2018, dropping from a 7.3% increase in early 2018, to 6.2% in early 2019. Despite this, close to 17 million additional IVAs have been received between early 2018 and early

2019, reaching another record high of almost 288 million arrivals.

The strongest early performances are seen in a number of destinations including:



Furthermore, 16% of these destinations had already posted volume increases of more than one million foreign arrivals in early 2019, relative to the same periods of 2018. Included amongst these are:



As Dr. Hardy pointed out that, “In general terms, the volume of foreign arrivals into most Asia Pacific destinations is still growing and therefore needs proper management protocols to ensure the long-term viability of those destinations.

He further added, “Broader, deeper and more timely performance metrics are now essential, in order to maintain both a competitive position and a proper management focus on the impacts of tourism. Such measures should include length of stay and yield as primary indicators, along with others that measure the health of the environment and society at all levels.”

Dr. Hardy concluded that, “In the broader sense, tourism should be balanced so as to offer the visitor an unforgettable experience, while also ensuring an appropriate and equitable dispersion of the benefits of that tourism across the resident population and of course the preservation of the environmental landscape.”

Pacific Asia Travel Association

‘Scattered Hotels’ Offering Village-Type Stays are Taking Off in Rural Japan



Visitors at the Nipponia hotel in Mino, Gifu Prefecture, can experience making washi (traditional Japanese paper) in the city. | COURTESY OF NOTE RENOVATION & DESIGN

JIJI

A recent trend in the tourism sector that lets visitors stay in re-created traditional villages while experiencing local cuisine and cultural activities is growing in popularity in Japan.

The “scattered hotel” business is believed to have originated in Europe, and Maruyama Village — a facility that opened in 2009 in Sasayama, Hyogo Prefecture — is said to be the pioneer in Japan. Users of the facility can partake in activities such as agriculture, pottery-making and tea ceremony while staying at renovated traditional houses.

In Mino, Gifu Prefecture, which flourished with the production and trade of high-quality washi (Japanese paper) during the Edo Period (1603-1868), a traditional century-old house that belonged to a washi merchant was renovated into an inn.

The inn opened in July and is named Nipponia. An association of local paper manufacturing companies is involved in the operation in a bid to promote the charms of Mino washi.

Many old merchant houses still stand in Mino. The front desk of the hotel is located in another renovated traditional house, while a vacant traditional house nearby is currently being renovated to become the second accommodation facility for the hotel. Six hotel rooms can be used, each by up to seven people. Rates start at ¥20,000 per person.

Jun Mizuishi, a 36-year-old resident of Saitama Prefecture, used the hotel for group training.

“We could fully enjoy Mino by experiencing local cuisine and Mino washi-making, as well as by enjoying local landscapes,” Mizuishi said.

Scattered-style hotels are also found in Kyoto; Otsu, Shiga Prefecture; Obama, Fukui Prefecture; and other areas. Preparations to open such a facility are currently underway in Hokkaido and Kumamoto Prefecture.

Airi Ishikawa, from travel website Ikyu Corp., said scattered-type hotels are growing in popularity because business collaborations with local entities tend to work smoothly because of the expectation that such projects will help revitalize local communities and breathe new life into abandoned buildings.

Those involved in the business are also hoping that it will encourage foreign tourists to visit their communities.

Japan Times

'Smart Cities' Best Placed to Cope with Mass Tourism

By Javier Delgado Rivera

UN summit says technology can help visitors, officials and locals manage tourist hordes

A UN summit in Kazakhstan in mid-October 2019 on tourism in cities brought together leading public and private actors from around the world to try to make urban tourism a win-win for residents and tourists alike.

It may come as a surprise to you that “over-tourism” was one of the most popular words of 2018.

But if cities could talk, they may agree. More than 500 million of the 1.4 billion international tourist trips taken worldwide in 2018 involved a visit to some of the globe’s 300 most popular cities, many of them in Asia.

Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan’s newly renamed capital, hosted the 8th United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Summit on Urban Tourism. The event aimed at “identifying the challenges cities face as tourist numbers continue to rise around the world, and to explore solutions so that this growth can be properly managed,” as Zurab Pololikashvili, secretary-general of this UN agency, described the event.

“Globalization is leading to the removal of barriers for tourism,” Altai Kulginov, mayor of Nur-Sultan, noted during the opening ceremony of the summit, which drew mayors and representatives from more than 80 countries.

Depending on who you talk to, this could be good or bad news.

As the Declaration that emerged from the event admitted, “the growth of urban tourism also creates important challenges in terms of the use of natural resources, environmental changes, socio-cultural impact, pressure on infrastructure, mobility, peace and security, congestion management and the relationship with host communities.”

Negative impacts

Mochamad Basuki Hadimuljono, Indonesia’s Minister of Public Works and Housing, said at the summit: “It is crucial to preserve our environment and the local culture from the negative influences that tourism sometimes brings.”

“We need to teach in schools that tourists not only bring prosperity to the city. If residents seek to interact with our visitors, they will be enriched too,” Bekturova Malika, deputy mayor of Nur-Sultan, told Asia Times.

Officials speaking in Nur-Sultan agreed that over-tourism – or congestion, as the UNWTO refers to it – is never a citywide phenomenon, but rather, an annoying concentration of visitors in highly popular areas. It is an event aggravated by the seasons.

“We need to create a greater variety of spaces attractive for tourists, so that they are not only spread more evenly over



A panoramic view of Bangkok at dusk. The Thai capital has been the world’s most visited city for four years. Photo: iStock

the city, but also have an incentive to stay more days,” said Khachit Chatchawanit, deputy permanent secretary of Bangkok’s Metropolitan Administration.

Khachit spoke on the sidelines of the summit. With 23 million tourists received in 2018, Bangkok has been the world’s most visited city for the last four years.

High-tech solutions

The overarching conclusion from this summit was that the future of urban tourism belongs to smart cities – places where innovation, technology, accessibility, sustainability and good governance address the downsides brought by the masses and manage growth in the sector.

The Nur-Sultan Declaration – called ‘Smart Cities, Smart Destinations’ – envisions how big data, artificial intelligence, the internet of things, virtual and augmented reality will help cities better manage their flows of visitors.

“Technology can make a difference in exposing tourists to other areas and activities in the places where they travel. For example, the Chinese city of Hangzhou uses SMS, online applications and social media to inform visitors where and when a place is exceeding a comfortable degree of visitation, proposing alternative places to visit,” Sandra Carvão, the UNWTO chief for Market Intelligence and Competitiveness, told Asia Times.

Ms Carvão was citing a UNWTO report she helped edit that also features how Macao has developed virtual reality applications to help tourists complete their visits to some of the city’s most overcrowded sites, in case they could not manage to explore them all.

“In Helsinki we use a WeChat application to help Chinese tourists navigate the Finnish capital,” Pia Pakarinen, the deputy mayor of Helsinki, said.

But technology and better management alone will not ease the inconvenience that over-tourism presents to urban residents. For the “tourist go home” slogan seen in some of world’s most popular cities to be a thing of the past, visitors themselves should make an effort to learn and respect the local customs, as they try to reduce their footprint in the places they chose to go.

“Bangkok still has the capacity to welcome more tourists,” Khun Khachit said about the world’s most visited city.

Such confidence probably echoes the view of most cities around the world. The meeting in Kazakhstan showed that at least, this ambition comes with the recognition that “business as usual” is not an option.

Asia Times

G20 Ministers Vow to Address Issue of ‘Over-Tourism’ at Hokkaido Meeting



Tourism ministers from the Group of 20 economies meet in Kutchan, Hokkaido, on October 26, 2019. | KYODO

Kyodo

Tourism ministers from the Group of 20 leading industrialized nations and emerging economies agreed on October 26, 2019 to step up efforts to address friction between visitors and local residents and the destruction of nature through what is called ‘over-tourism.’

In a declaration issued after a two-day meeting in Kutchan, Hokkaido, the ministers agreed to “work toward managing tourism

for the benefit of visitors and local communities.”

While welcoming tourism as a vehicle for economic growth and job creation, the declaration said the growth of tourism “creates important challenges” such as the preservation of natural resources, congestion management and the relationship with host communities.

“We must study measures to address friction between tourists and locals, as well as to protect the environment,” tourism minister Kazuyoshi Akaba, who presided over the meeting, said at a news conference.

Cities such as Amsterdam in the Netherlands and Venice in Italy have suffered from issues related to overcrowding from an excess of tourists.

In Japan, issues like traffic congestion and garbage dumping are seen in tourist destinations such as Mount Fuji, Kyoto and Kanagawa Prefecture’s Kamakura.

The G20 comprises Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Britain, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the United States and the European Union.

Japan Times

Batumi Named as Europe’s Leading Emerging Tourism Destination



The World Travel Awards were established in 1993 to acknowledge, reward and celebrate excellence across all key sectors of the travel, tourism and hospitality industries. Photo: Nino Alavidze/Agenda.ge



Chairman of the Government of Adjara Tornike Rijvadze (centre) believes this will contribute to increased awareness of Batumi worldwide. Photo: Batumi City Hall

Georgia’s Black Sea town of Batumi received the title of ‘Europe’s Leading Emerging Tourism Destination’ at the World Travel Awards (WTA) ceremony held in Madeira, Portugal on June 8, 2019.

The organisers of the awards ceremony reported that “the captivating mix of Belle Époque meets contemporary splendour helped Batumi, Georgia, lift the title”.

“Our inaugural ceremony in Madeira has proved an incredible success. We have had the privilege of recognising the leading destinations, hotels, resorts, airlines and travel providers from across Europe and my congratulations to each of our winners”, Graham E. Cooke, the Founder WTA stated.

Baku (Azerbaijan), Derry (North Ireland), Kutná Hora (Czech Republic), Ljubljana (Slovenia), Matera (Italy), Mostar (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Sofia (Bulgaria) were competing Batumi in this nomination.

World Travel Awards, often referred to as the Oscar of tourism awards, were established in 1993 to acknowledge, reward and celebrate excellence across all key sectors of the travel, tourism and hospitality industries.

Today, WTA brand is recognised globally as the ultimate hallmark of industry excellence.

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Brunei to Capitalise on Rise of Sports Tourism

By Rasidah Hj Abu Bakar



The Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism YB Dato Hj Ali (L) and Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports YB Major General (Rtd) Dato Hj Aminuddin launch the Brunei Sports and Adventure event on September 26, 2019. Photo: Rasidah Hj Abu Bakar/ The Scoop

Gov't launches brochure to promote sports and adventure activities

Brunei wants to cash in on the growing sports tourism industry after compiling a list of adventure sports available in the sultanate.

Collaborating with tourism service providers and travel tour operators, the government identified 15 sports and adventure activities in a brochure that was launched on September 26, 2019. The activities range from mountain biking to abseiling, hiking and camping, water sports and diving, archery, golfing, and birdwatching.

The US\$488.5 billion sports tourism industry is one of the fastest growing segments of the global travel industry.

Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism YB Dato Seri Setia Hj Ali Apong said the government has not set a target on the number of sports tourists but is aiming to reach 300,000 tourist arrivals this year.

In 2018, Brunei received 278,136 international tourist arrivals, a 7.4 percent increase from the previous year, an indication of a positive trend in tourism development in the country.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the brochure launch, the minister said the brochure will continue to be revised to include new activities. The brochure will act as a platform for tourism service providers and travel tour operators to showcase their products and services, he added.

The activities will also be added as part of the annual

Brunei December Festival, a month-long festival to encourage Bruneians to stay and spend their money in the country.

In his opening remarks, YB Dato Hj Ali urged service providers and travel tour operators to care for the safety and well-being of visitors. In addition to enforcing safety measures for outdoor activities, he added that it is also important to ensure there is little to zero negative impact on the environment and on wildlife and marine life.

“Service operators and providers must ensure this at all times and remind their clients that the preservation of our environment is also just as important as the preservation of our health and safety,” he said.

YB Dato Hj Ali launched the brochure along with Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports YB Major General (Rtd) Dato Paduka Seri Hj Aminuddin Ihsan Pehin Orang Kaya Saiful Mulok Dato Seri Paduka Hj Abidin.

The event also featured an exhibition of the tourism service providers and operators.

Founder of Sumbiling Eco Village, Leslie Chiang told The Scoop that they have received over 1,000 visitors in 2019.

Only 30 percent of their visitors are locals and Leslie is optimistic that the number will increase as they continue to push for their hiking and cultural activities through BDF and the newly-launched brochure.

“So far in 2019 we have more than 1,000 visitors. The number of visitors per month varies between 100-200 visitors with the summer months, June to August recording the highest number of visitors,” he said. Sumbiling Eco Village is a community-based tourism initiative.

Hj Muhd Abu Hurairah Hj Zainal, trail leader for Katimahar Agripark, is eyeing 20,000 visitors to the park per year. The 250-acre park was established in 2017 and offers visitors packages for all-terrain vehicle (ATV) off-road adventure. They also offer family homestay and camping. From 2017 to 2019, the park recorded 3,000 to 4,000 international visitors and over 6,000 domestic visitors, mostly from companies and schools on outings and field trips.

“People say that there nothing much to do here, actually we have many activities...we want to show them the fun side of Brunei,” he said.

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