



CACCI

Tourism Newsletter

Volume 13

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Message from the Chairman



It is with great pleasure I take this opportunity to wish all our members and their families a Happy New Year.

As the Chairman of Asian Council on Tourism, when we look back of the achievements of the tourism sector worldwide we can be very happy of the continuous growth of the tourism sector in the world. It is also encouraging to note that the Asian Pacific Region has shown the highest growth amongst the other regions. Most of the economies in the regional countries have identified Tourism as a key driver for the economic development in their countries. Even when you look at the future as per the world tourism organization we can envisage a growth of more than 10 % for the next 10 years.

With the guidance and assistance of the CACCI we are confident that all the tourism stake holders in Asia Pacific can pool their experiences, knowledge and various strengths to develop tourism sector in their own countries. I am confident that we should be able to formulate a strategy to promote each other's tourism sector at next year's CACCI conference in Hong Kong.

I wish all a very Happy New Year.

Anura Samarawickrema Lokuhetty
Chairman
Asian Council on Tourism

Happy New Year 2015

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UNWTO Executive Council discusses the links between tourism and culture

The importance of building new partnership models for the sustainable development of cultural tourism gained particular relevance at the 99th session of the UNWTO Executive Council meeting in Samarkand. The Council also debated the latest international tourism trends and their impact on the Programme of Work of the Organization (Samarkand, Uzbekistan, 1-4 October 2014).

The UNWTO Executive Council stressed the need to promote new governance models to foster closer cooperation between tourism and culture in order to advance the sustainable development of cultural tourism. Other issues raised during the thematic discussion on tourism and culture included congestion management, financing, public-private sector cooperation, the role of local communities in tourism development and cultural preservation, as well as the promotion of events, creative industries and contemporary culture and history in enriching the visitor experience.

The debate took place against the backdrop of the forthcoming UNWTO/UNESCO World Conference on Tourism and Culture, Building a New Partnership (Siem Reap, Cambodia, 4-5 February 2015), which will bring together, for the first time, Ministers of Tourism and



Culture from around the world.

Assessing the latest international tourism trends and challenges, UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai, highlighted the positive results of international tourism in recent years and underlined some of the challenges facing the sector. “Despite geopolitical and economic challenges, the number of international tourist arrivals has grown by 5% a year on average since 2010, a trend that has translated into more economic growth, more exports and more jobs” he said in opening the Council. “Yet, as we welcome milestones and look forward to the continued expansion of our sector, it only underlines the need for us to strengthen our Organization in raising tourism’s prominence to ensure its sustainable growth and its positive benefits for all people,” Mr. Rifai added.

In this context, participating

countries recalled the need to fight misperceptions about the Ebola Virus Outbreak in Africa stressing that the World Health Organization (WHO) does not recommend any ban on international travel.

The 99th Session of the UNWTO Executive Council, chaired by Indonesia and co-chaired by Jamaica and Mozambique, was attended by 33 Members – 24 UNWTO Executive Council Members and 9 UNWTO Members attending as Observers – and a total of 120 participants.

The 100th Session of the Executive Council will take place in Croatia. Jamaica, Mozambique and Croatia will act respectively as Chair, First and Second Vice-Chairs of the Executive Council for the year 2015.

Source: Pacific Asia Travel Association, October 7, 2014 ❁



New Zealand launches new business events advocates programme

Over the past year New Zealand has played host to everyone from geophysicists to private detectives, doctors to journalists, thanks to the support of Tourism New Zealand's (TNZ) business events programme.

With the launch of a new Business Events advocates programme New Zealand is set to see even more of these valuable delegations visiting our shores.

The programme was announced on October 22, 2014 at the inaugural New Zealand Business Events Awards dinner, held by TNZ and partners Auckland Convention Bureau (ACB) and Air New Zealand.

The dinner celebrated the success New Zealand has had in the Business Events sector and acknowledged the contribution of key industry and sector leaders.

Event attendees have bid for a combined 29 international events representing an estimated 13,500 delegates and injecting approximately NZD\$41 million into the New Zealand economy.

TNZ's International Business Events Manager, Bjoern Spreitzer says, "It's great to see New Zealand successfully bidding for and winning international association conventions.

"Much of this comes down to the influential sector leaders who are putting their hands up to champion their field of expertise to attract key



conventions to our shores.

"The advocate programme is about creating lasting relationships with these individuals so that they can continue to bid for international conferences and encourage their colleagues to do so as well," says Bjoern.

TNZ, in partnership with ACB, has developed an advocate programme that will identify and engage thought leaders in their field, as champions for business events.

Advocate programmes are employed broadly by many countries and large cities in the international business events sector.

The programme will see regional programmes being developed throughout the country, with the ACB the first out of the gate, while Tourism New Zealand will manage the overarching national strategy.

ACB Manager Anna Hayward says the Auckland Advocate Programme - which will be launched in March 2015 - is critical for Auckland and forms part of ACB's overall strategy to encourage more business events to the region.

The ACB team has worked with some incredibly passionate individuals over the years and is excited to harness their enthusiasm and work with them to lift Auckland's profile on the world stage of international conferencing.

"The Auckland Advocate Programme will use the expertise and support of the ACB and TNZ team to assist sector leaders to attract and deliver world class conferences," says Anna.

Air New Zealand Chief Commercial and Sales Officer Cam Wallace also welcomes the announcement of the advocate programme.

"The business events market is an important means of driving visitor arrivals to New Zealand over the shoulder season."

"This initiative is a great addition to work already being done by the tourism industry. Earlier this year, Air New Zealand launched a Conference Support Programme which aims to grow the number of conference bids won for New Zealand by working in partnership with conference organisers," says Cam.

TNZ has significantly increased its efforts in the Business Events sector and in the last financial year has bid for 39 international events and has secured seven. The total economic value of these wins to New Zealand is NZD\$15.6 million.

Source: Pacific Asia Travel Association, October 23, 2014 ❀



Sri Lanka urged to focus on attracting Japanese tourists

Sri Lanka's tourism sector should build awareness about the Island's tourism attraction and also improve its tourism facilities, if the country needs to attract more Japanese tourists to the country, says Mr. Kiichiro Iwase, The First Secretary of Head of Economic Cooperation section of the Embassy of Japan in Sri Lanka.

"Tropical climate, attractive tourist spots, food and comfortable atmosphere are some of the key factors that attract Japanese tourists to Sri Lanka," however Kiichiro highlighted, that the high tour cost, infrastructure issues such as the long time taken to arrive at tour spots & lack of sanitary facilities and more importantly lack of awareness about Sri Lanka in Japan as a tourist destination, as the major drawbacks.

The First Secretary of the Japanese Embassy in Colombo revealed these facts, when he took part in an Interactive Evening and a Panel discussion in early July 2014, which was conducted by the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) - Sri Lanka Chapter which is an affiliate to the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce.

The interactive evening was held under the title of "Tourism opportunities for Sri Lanka in the Japanese Market".

Among the other speakers were Mr. Vasantha Leelananda, Executive Vice President- JKH, Head -Leisure Inbound Sector of Walkers Tours Limited, Ms. Amal Goonetilleke, Regional Director- Sales (Sri Lanka & Maldives) Taj Hotels, Mr. Merrick Gooneratne, Executive Director of TOS Lanka Co (Pvt) Ltd and Mr. Dharshan Munidasa, founder of Nihonbashi & Co-founder of Ministry of Crab.

The panel emphasized that Sri Lanka should focus more on promotions and implement new marketing strategies for Japan's baby-boomer generation.

Iwase also said that the travel companies should distribute information on natural and historical wonders of Sri Lanka, improve tourists' convenience, and develop new fields of tourism such as MICE, Green tourism, Health tourism and Sport tourism.

The PATA Sri Lanka Chapter enables its members to conduct their various assigned responsibilities for



selling travel related products and providing services to visitors to the island in a more effective manner. The key aim is to promote Sri Lanka as a PATA destination, under the aegis of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce.

Membership of the Chapter consists of 63 local members, comprising travel agents, tour operators, sightseeing operators, ground/water transportation operators and hoteliers whose businesses are situated within the geographical area of Sri Lanka.

Source: The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, July 8, 2014

South Korea's ambitions in medical tourism

By: Simon Mundy

South Korea's demographic projections make for unsettling reading: with one of the world's lowest birth rates, its population is set to age more rapidly than that of any other advanced nation over the next 35 years.

The trend, however, will mean a boom in demand for medical services – a dynamic that the government is keen to complement by promoting rapid growth in the country's medical tourism, pharmaceutical and medical equipment industries.

The most conspicuous area of growth in this sector is reflected by the

plastic surgery advertisements that line the subway stations of Seoul's wealthy southern areas. South Korea has one of the world's highest number of plastic surgeons per capita, reflecting an image-conscious culture that pushes job applicants to include photographs with their CV even when seeking administrative work.

The huge international success of South Korean pop music and television shows has helped to make plastic surgery one of the most successful export areas for the country's medical sector, as fans seek to achieve the stars'

glamorous looks.

"About 40 per cent of my customers are now from overseas," says Park Yang-soo, founder of Dream Plastic Surgery, one of the leading cosmetic surgery companies. China is the most common source of business, with others coming from Japan, southeast Asia and the former Soviet Union. "Chinese customers want an obvious outcome – bigger eyes, a higher nose. But Japanese want something more natural."

South Korea's ambitions in

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South Korea's

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medical tourism extend well beyond plastic surgery. Most of the country's leading hospitals have started wooing foreign tourists with special international health centres. The hospitals promise patients from developing Asian nations treatment that rivals that offered in the world's richest countries, at a significantly lower price. At Incheon International Airport meanwhile, there is a special information desk for medical tourists, as large as the one catering to all other visitors.

The business has spread well beyond Seoul. Lee Dong-wha set up Dowoo Tour four years ago to cater to tourists seeking plastic surgery in the southern city of Daegu. The company takes care of visa arrangements, hospital and hotel bookings, as well as organising sightseeing trips for recuperating patients. It has an office in Vietnam, and partnerships with agencies in other markets including China and Russia. "Daegu is a medical city – the cost is much cheaper than Seoul, but the medical quality is high," Mr Lee says.

South Korea's government this year announced plans to further encourage medical tourism, including a help centre providing legal support to foreign patients unhappy with their treatment, and relaxed visa requirements for medical tourists. The Korea Tourism Organisation is making ambitious forecasts for the sector: it projects that the annual number of medical tourists will rise from 399,000 last year to 998,000 in 2020, with

resultant revenue rising from Won2.5tn to Won3.5tn.

The government is encouraging South Korean hospital groups to establish businesses abroad; at the end of last year there were 111 such operations in 19 countries including China, the US and Mongolia. Meanwhile, it wants to attract foreign hospital operators to invest in special economic zones that have been established in areas such as Jeju, a southern holiday island, and Songdo and Incheon, in the area around Seoul. However, the first such proposal was blocked in September, when the government ruled that China Stem Cell Health Group was not qualified to build its planned for-profit hospital on Jeju.

Foreign groups in the pharmaceuticals industry have also had a sometimes difficult experience in South Korea. The country's national health insurance system has used its position as the nation's dominant buyer of drugs to achieve some of the lowest prices in the advanced world: the average price of drugs launched in the country since 2007 is just 44 per cent of the average for nations in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

"In Korea the drug policy remains more focused on maintaining fiscal balance rather than promoting innovation, and that is why many global pharmaceutical companies are facing difficulties in running their business in Korea," Kim Jin-ho, head of GlaxoSmithKline's business in South Korea, said in July.

Foreign pharmaceutical groups have warned that they are already holding back from launching some new drugs in the country, and argue that the pricing policy will hamper



the country's hopes of developing an indigenous pharmaceutical sector. South Korean pharmaceutical groups focus mostly on "generics" – out-of-patent drugs originally developed by other companies. However, the research group Frost and Sullivan has named the country a potential leader in biosimilars, drugs derived from living organisms, which is another area benefiting from extensive government support.

South Korea has found a niche in the medical technology industry, with its main exports consisting of ultrasound scanning machines and dental implants. The biggest company in this field is Samsung Medison, acquired in 2010 by Samsung Electronics, which has targeted medical equipment as one of its main long-term growth areas.

"Korea is far behind" the leading countries in medical technology, such as the US and Germany, says Jin Kinam, a public health professor at Yonsei University. But he argues the sector can benefit from aggressive support from the state, just as the South Korean electronics and shipbuilding industries did in previous decades.

The government wants South Korea's share of the medical equipment market to rise from 1 per cent to 5 per cent by 2020, and is providing funding and marketing assistance to the sector. "The government has seen the potential in this market. We can get a certain competitive edge," Mr Jin says.

Source: *Financial Times*, October 16, 2014



Fast Travel Gains Momentum in Asia Pacific



The International Air Transport Association (IATA) announced progress in the implementation of Fast Travel in the Asia-Pacific region. Qantas Airways has achieved Platinum status for Fast Travel implementation, while Narita International Airport Corporation has engaged IATA to conduct a study on the implementation of Fast Travel at Tokyo's Narita Airport.

The Fast Travel program responds to passenger demand for a more seamless travel experience and more control through six time-saving, self-service initiatives. They are:

- Self check-in and/or automatic check-in
- Bags ready-to-go
- Document check
- Flight re-booking
- Self-boarding
- Bag recovery

In IATA's 2014 Global Passenger Survey, over 75% of air travelers would prefer to check in online or automatically by receiving a text message or email. Only 15% prefer to receive their boarding passes from an agent at an airport check-in counter. The industry's target is to implement Fast Travel projects covering 27% of eligible passengers this year and by 2020, the goal is to have 80% of passengers offered a complete self-service suite based on common industry standards.

First Asia-Pacific Platinum Airline

IATA has awarded Qantas Platinum status in recognition of the airline's progress in implementing the Fast Travel program. The award was presented by Tony Tyler, IATA's Director General and CEO, during the World Passenger Symposium held in San Diego.

Qantas is the first airline in Asia-Pacific and the second in the world to achieve Platinum status. The Platinum status is achieved when Fast Travel compliant solutions are made available to at least 80% of an airline's passengers.

"I congratulate Qantas on this achievement. Travelers have told us through the annual IATA Global Passenger Survey that they want to be able to do more things for themselves. Qantas is leading the Asia-Pacific region in responding to this self-service expectation. I encourage the Asia-Pacific airlines to fast track the implementation of Fast Travel across their network so as to provide their customers with more options to improve their passenger experience," said Conrad Clifford, Regional Vice President, Asia-Pacific.

Qantas Domestic Executive Manager, Customer Experience, Paul Jones said that the achievement of Platinum Status reflected Qantas' commitment to a streamlined customer experience.

"Travellers today rightly expect a seamless journey through the airport, and we've invested in technology and training to deliver that. From smart check-in facilities across airports in Australia to online and mobile check-in, auto bag drops, and mobile boarding passes at the gate, our goal is to make the process as fast and efficient as possible," said Jones.

"Customer service innovation is central to Qantas' strategy and we're committed to playing a lead role in the development of Fast Travel across the industry."

First Fast Travel Consulting Project

IATA has been engaged by the Narita International Airport Corporation (NAA), which manages Tokyo's Narita Airport, to conduct a study on challenges and opportunities for the implementation of Fast Travel initiatives for international travelers at Narita Airport. NAA is the launch



customer for this service by IATA Consulting.

Through the study, IATA will provide recommendations on how the various Fast Travel initiatives can be implemented and integrated with the existing systems at Narita Airport.

"Japan has been at the forefront of many of the advances in the passenger experience including domestic air travel. Thus, we are delighted to partner with NAA to take this forward for international travel at Narita Airport. The airlines are eager and ready to offer a more convenient and faster experience to their passengers through the use of technology solutions. This project will help bring the airlines and airports together in delivering a better travel experience at Narita Airport," said Clifford.

"Given the expected traffic growth in the Asia-Pacific region, major Asian airports are under pressure to handle the anticipated traffic growth. Partnership between airlines and airports will be crucial to address this challenge. IATA's Fast Travel initiatives will bring more efficiency for airline operations, and improve the customer experience. From an airport perspective, we can make more efficient use of the airport's facilities and improve the airport experience for travelers. Reducing the waiting time at the various queues also means that travelers can have more time to use the airport's facilities and for shopping. We are happy to work with IATA to identify how Fast Travel can bring more efficiency and convenience, and on its implementation at Narita Airport," said Hideharu Miyamoto, Vice President Corporate Strategies & Planning, NAA.

Source: Pacific Asia Travel Association, October 17, 2014

Asia Pacific seen to drive global growth in travel

By: Miguel R. Camus

Cheaper ticket prices and a booming global population will drive growth in the air passenger sector through 2034, with Asia Pacific seen to account for almost half of worldwide traffic through that period, the International Air Transport Association, or IATA, said in a report.

IATA, in its first 20-year passenger growth forecast, said Asia Pacific as a whole will see an extra 1.8 billion passengers annually, increasing its market size to about 2.9 billion passengers.

That would account for 42 percent of global passenger traffic, with its 4.9-percent annual growth rate the highest alongside the Middle East, IATA said.

It noted that some areas would grow faster than others, like Indonesia, which will be among the top 10 biggest air passenger markets in 2020, and is estimated to be the 6th biggest by 2029.

Overall, global air passenger number are forecast to hit 7.3 billion by 2034, or a 4.1 percent annual growth rate, from the current 3.3 billion passengers expected to travel by air this year.

IATA said by the end of the 20-year period, the aviation sector would be valued at about \$6 trillion of gross domestic product, supporting around 105 million jobs.

The industry currently accounts for \$2.4 trillion in terms of economic activity and provides support for 58 million jobs.

“It is an exciting prospect to think that in the next 20 years more than twice as many passengers as today will have the chance to fly. Air connectivity on this scale will help transform economic opportunities for millions of people,” Tony Tyler, IATA’s Director General and CEO, said in the statement.

The IATA report also highlighted expectations that China would overtake the United States as world’s largest passenger market by 2030.

It noted that both the United States and China would still lead other areas by a wide margin.

As noted, growing populations, improving living standards and price availability would help drive global air passenger travel.

“People can only fly as long as



ticket taxes don’t price them out of their seats. And air connectivity can only thrive when nations open their skies and their markets. It’s a virtuous circle,” IATA said.

IATA noted that air transport prices have been declined by a huge margin since the 1950s, although further declines in the past decade “have bottomed out” because of higher oil prices.

“In the coming two decades, the downward trend in the real cost of air travel is expected to resume, at a rate of around 1 to 1.5 percent per year. Air connectivity is expected to increase with the addition of new longer-range mid-size aircraft,” IATA said.

Source: *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, October 25, 2014

Asia’s travel and tourism industry ‘to face talent crisis’

Asia’s travel and tourism sector is booming but will face a severe shortage of skilled workers in the next 10 years, a top industry executive said Wednesday.

Investments in human capital have lagged behind spending on infrastructure such as airports and hotels, said David Scowsill, president and chief executive of the London-based World Travel and Tourism Council.

“There’s going to be a great

shortage of the right people to support the growth in this particular industry,” he said in Singapore.

“We are indeed facing a talent crisis which could impact the quality of our product in the next 10 years...



we’ve seen a lot of investments in infrastructure but not a similar investment in human capital.”

Scowsill was speaking at a news conference at the start of ITB Asia 2014, a global trade show for the region’s travel market.

In a separate press statement, Scowsill said that “if the situation is not addressed immediately, it could have serious consequences on the forecast social and economic growth in many countries across Asia in the next decade”.

He said tourism and travel in Asia grew by close to 6.0 percent last year,

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Asia's travel

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creating one million new jobs and generating \$2.0 trillion, or around nine percent of the region's gross domestic product.

"Currently travel and tourism employs around 65 million people and supports one in 12 jobs in Asia," he said, adding that this exceeds some industries like financial services.

Neeta Lachmandas, assistant chief executive of the Singapore Tourism Board, said while Asia is a "focal point" in global travel, there were also challenges.

"We expect a shortage of some eight million jobs in the next 15-20

years, so there's a tremendous opportunity for us, but there are also a lot of challenges that we need to overcome if we want to take advantage of this opportunity," she said at the news conference.

Spending by business travellers worldwide is expected to reach a record high of \$1.18 trillion this year, with nearly 40 percent of that coming from the Asia-Pacific, the Global Business Travel Association said in a statement at the trade show.

Corporate travellers from China



lead the Asian pack, spending \$225 billion last year, coming a close second to the United States which topped the world rankings by spending \$274 billion.

Source: Agence France Presse (AFP), October 29, 2014

Philippines named Asia-Pacific region's most outstanding destination

by Chino Leyco



JIMENEZ JR.

The Philippines is named as the most outstanding destination in Asia-Pacific region by world's oldest travel trade newspaper Travel Trade Gazette (TTG).

In a statement, the Department of Tourism (DOT) announced that the Philippines was awarded the Destination of the Year at the 25th Annual TTG Travel Awards 2014 held in Bangkok, Thailand last Thursday night.

As the DOT raises the country's international profile with its Visit the Philippines Year 2015 campaign, Tourism Secretary Ramon R. Jimenez Jr., thanked the TTG Asia Media's Travel Trade Publishing group for the recognition.

"We would like to thank TTG for the invaluable support extended to our organization in our marketing and information dissemination efforts. As a trusted travel trade publication, it has been a formidable partner throughout these years in bringing the Philippines closer to our markets," Jimenez said.

The TTG Travel Awards, a prestigious travel industry event, has been recognizing the exemplary organizations that raise the bar of excellence in of Asia-Pacific's travel trade since 1989.

The TTG event honors organizations and individuals in four categories: Travel Supplier, Travel Agency, Outstanding Achievement, and Travel Hall of Fame.

Jimenez accepted the award before

Asia's tourism professionals at the Awarding Ceremony and Gala Dinner held at the Centara Grand and Bangkok Convention Center in Thailand.

The Philippines was chosen as the region's most outstanding destination in 2014 for distinguishing itself with its proactive steps and initiatives towards the development and promotion of the travel industry.

The Destination of the Year falls under the Outstanding Achievement Awards. Other categories include Travel Personality of the Year, Best Travel Entrepreneur, Best Marketing and Relationship Effort, and Best Trade Supporter. The winners are determined by TTG's editorial team.

The TTG Travel Awards is now reputed as the most coveted and influential awards to be garnered in the region's travel industry.

The signature trophy, a statuette of Hermes (the god of travel and protector of travellers in ancient Greek mythology), is cast in solid pewter

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Tourism boom boosts Philippine hotel sector

By: Doris C. Dumlao

Metro Manila's stock of hotel rooms will expand by 22.9 percent year-on-year to end this year at 21,532 as more property developers invest in tourism, widely deemed as the low-hanging fruit for the domestic economy, property consulting firm Colliers International said.

As many as 4,015 new hotel rooms will be added to Metro Manila's hotel inventory this year, including those to open along Manila Bay at the integrated gaming resorts in Pagcor Entertainment City, envisioned to be the country's version of the Las Vegas strip casino resorts. From 2014 to 2017, an average 3,700 new hotel rooms will be delivered annually in the metropolis, Colliers said in its second-quarter property report, which aggregates the official pipeline of property developers.

For the first half of this year, Colliers said only 20 percent of additional hotel rooms in the 2014 pipeline had been actually delivered, brought largely by four projects, namely Tune Hotels Ortigas (182), Azumi Boutique Hotel (187), Marco Polo Ortigas (313) and Citadines



Salcedo Makati (215). Accommodate the growing number of visitors, more hotels are slated to be constructed within Newport City by 2016. Metro Manila's stock of hotel rooms will expand by 22.9 percent year-on-year to end this year at 21,532 as more property developers invest in tourism, widely deemed as the low-hanging fruit for the domestic economy, property consulting firm Colliers International said.

Salcedo Makati (215).

The property consulting firm said the bulk of the additional hotel inventory would be delivered in the

second semester, with close to 1,660 new rooms to be located in Parañaque City. While 75 percent of the rooms will be located in Pagcor City, two others will be located elsewhere.

“One particular project, Go Hotels Parañaque (199 rooms), is expected to attract budget travelers who want to temporarily stay near the airport terminals,” the research said.

For the new rooms to be delivered each year through 2017, 56 percent will be located in Pagcor City while a substantial number will be located in Pasay City, Quezon City and Taguig, the report noted. These three locations are expected to contribute 3,600 rooms that will cater to business travelers, with the majority of the hotels to be operated by international brands.

Philippines named

...Continued from page 8

and plated in 24K gold. Weighing two kilograms, the Hermes trophy has since then been the icon of the annual awards.

“This award belongs to all Filipinos. It is the Filipino people that have ensured the acceptance of It's More Fun in the Philippines as a true and accurate description of the participative and active role every Filipino plays in ensuring a successful and enjoyable visit to the Philippines,” Jimenez said.

“Again, the determination of

the Filipino people, coupled with the support of our President, Benigno S. Aquino III, is our inspiration to build a brighter tourism future for the Philippines—an industry that is more profitable and more inclusive,” he added.

The DOT is gearing up its efforts to promote Visit the Philippines Year (VPY) 2015 – an invitation for all to experience the enduring promise of more fun in the Philippines.

Source: Manila Bulletin, October 3, 2014



Source: Philippine Daily Inquirer, August 26, 2014



Seizing its chance, Iran seeks tourism revival

By: Siavosh Ghazi

At the foot of Persepolis, busloads of foreign tourists gaze in awe at the ancient mud-brick ceremonial capital that Iran hopes will be part of a rebirth of its tourism industry.

Although decades of sanctions mean the hotels and infrastructure are not five star, a tentative political thaw with the West is drawing visitors to Iranian attractions steeped in myth and rumour.

Persepolis, a jewel of the first Persian empire whose palace and terraces took more than 100 years to build, starting under Darius the Great in 518 BC, is one of the highlights.

“Before coming to Iran I knew the vision of this country from the outside was very dark,” says Piotr Chwalba, from Poland, finally looking at Persepolis after thinking for years of visiting.

“A place like Iran has two sides -- the one created by the media and the other version, the truth, where everyone helps you when you travel and everyone smiles at you. It’s great.”

Sincere as such testimony is, a rise in visitors has more to do with politics than praise. The prospects for tour operators were bleak until recently.

The election last year of President Hassan Rouhani and his decision to restart negotiations with the United States and other leading nations about Iran’s nuclear programme has been a

catalyst.

- ‘Hospitable and very curious’ -

While seeking to play host to international visitors it also helps that his speeches do not tend to excoriate the West in the same manner that his predecessor Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s did.

“Mr Rouhani’s demeanour, his smile, his positive interaction with the world has created a new sense of ease,” says Ibrahim Pourfaraj, president of Iran’s tour operators association.

Thomas, an engineer from Stuttgart, says the nuclear issue is the only thing he hears about Iran in the news back home.

“What we see is totally different than what we hear from the outside,” the 29-year-old German says. “The Iranians are very hospitable and very curious.”

Shiite pilgrims from Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon and Pakistan currently make up 60 percent of Iran’s visitors.

But the government’s main push is to recapture the spending power of Europe, Asia and America.

For Iran -- whose currency, the rial, has been severely depressed by rampant inflation -- tourism offers a foreign exchange windfall.

The cities of Isfahan, Shiraz and Yazd, all steeped in culture, are considered Iran’s top attractions, but sites such as Kish Island with its

beaches on the Gulf have sought to create a more relaxed holiday.

People are coming back. Official figures show that at the end of March, tourist numbers were up 35 percent year-on-year to 4.5 million, bringing in \$6 billion.

Iran, with 17 UNESCO-listed World Heritage sites, wants 20 million visitors within a decade.

- Hope, but no guarantees -

However, a nuclear deal remains a hope rather than a given and tour operators know optimism can vanish quickly. For the moment, local guides are filling their pockets.

“This is a new wave. We have between 300 percent and 400 percent more visitors,” says Mohsen Hajisaeid, who was looking after a group from Hong Kong.

“For some languages we don’t even have a guide to help them,” he explains.

Iran’s shortfalls are not confined to translators. Although many hotels have been built in the sprawling conurbations of Mashhad, Esfahan and Shiraz, the closest city to Persepolis, they are primarily for the domestic market. In the tourism sector there is a specific need for customer-focused training and more development.

“Our capabilities are limited compared to the influx of tourists,”

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Seizing its chance

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Massoud Soltani-Far, one of Iran's vice presidents whose brief includes tourism, recently said at an industry conference.

More than 900 projects are being undertaken at a cost of \$200 million, but there are still significant gaps in the market.

"Transport and four-star or five-star hotels are not there to meet the demand," Soltani-Far explained, perhaps alluding to well-publicised problems with the fitting-out of Iranian planes, due to sanctions.

But there are bright spots at the top of the market.

The "Jewels of Persia," a luxury train, arrived in Tehran on October 27 on an all-inclusive 15-day trip, with tickets costing \$9,000 to \$14,000.

Such trips may start to breed unease, however. Some conservative MPs are demanding tourists be given guidance on how to behave as soon as they arrive in the Islamic republic.

It is a sensitive issue visitors must embrace; the dress code for women is loose clothing, known as hijab, that covers the head and neck. Men should avoid shorts.

A recent spate of acid attacks on

Iranian women in Isfahan, reportedly because they were not properly veiled -- though authorities have denied such a link -- has highlighted the requirements.

To those travelling to Iran though, the warm welcome is outweighing concerns about dress, security or the need for high-class hotels and slick service.

"The country is safe -- maybe more so than some European countries," says Thomas from Germany.

Source: Agence France-Presse (AFP), November 2, 2014 ❀

Iran says number of foreign tourists surges

By Ali Akbar Dareini

TEHRAN, Iran--The number of foreigners visiting Iran jumped dramatically over the 12-month period ending in March, with 35 percent more tourists compared to the same period a year earlier, Iran's top tourism official said Saturday.

Masoud Soltanifar said on state TV that the thriving industry could

help boost Iran's economy out of recession and bring in much-needed hard currency. He said 4.5 million foreign tourists that came to the Islamic Republic over the period, bringing in some US\$6 billion in revenue.

He attributed the increase to the 2013 election of President Hassan Rouhani, who has shifted away from

the bombastic style adopted under his hard-line predecessor, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Rouhani, who has advocated for tourism, hopes it will boost the country's image.

"The new government has employed a proper language in international relations, leading to growth in tourism," Soltanifar said, adding that foreign tourists, most of whom are from neighboring countries, spend about US\$1,500 each in Iran.

Looser visa policies have also helped. The government has instructed its embassies around the world to issue visas, especially for group tours, within less than a week, while in the past applications took over a month.

Tourism from Europe has grown 200 percent, he said, thanks to fewer restrictions at embassies, especially in Germany.

Iran has 17 UNESCO-registered world heritage sites, and plans to host 20 million tourists a year by 2025, Soltanifar said, a sum that would fetch US\$30 billion annually.

That would require tripling the

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A photo taken on Oct. 15 shows the Ark-e Tabriz, which is a remnant of the Masjid Ali-Shah mosque built in the Ilkhanate period during the early 14th century in Tabriz, in Iran's northwestern East-Azerbaijan province.

Tourism in Turkey

Turkey, as a well-known tourism destination, continues to present investment opportunities both in the established and newly developing subsectors of the industry.

Turkey is currently the 6th most popular tourist destination in the world, attracting more than 30 million tourists each year, and the number continues to rise every year. The Turkish tourism industry's energetic and continuous growth remains unhindered by the negative effects of the recent global economic crisis, while retaining immense untapped potential. The



robustly growing industry is enriched by its wide variety of tourist attractions, such as breathtaking coastlines along the Aegean and Mediterranean seas with long sandy beaches and pristine bays. Adding to Turkey's natural riches, the country is the birthplace of many ancient civilizations that left their mark

in history. The Anatolian Peninsula has a vast number of archeological sites inherited from various empires and diverse cultures, some dating back millennia. From Ephesus to the West and Mount Nemrut to the East, it is common to encounter sacred sites, temples and religious grounds belonging to various cultures and beliefs.

Further contributing to Turkey's strong socio-economic growth, the Ministry of Tourism and non-governmental actors of the tourism industry are working towards increasing tourism receipts by utilizing the full potential of diverse opportunities in this key industry. The Turkish government offers programs and pursues policies that offer reduced utility prices and reduced tax rates, while decisively eliminating any bureaucratic barriers that may hinder sectorial growth. The combined efforts of the government and industry organizations have already enabled the rise of investment in new areas, such as construction of large convention and expo centers which boost convention tourism, particularly in the country's largest city, Istanbul. With its unique location that bridges Europe and Asia and with over a hundred five-star hotels and state-of-the-art facilities, the historic metropolis is the ideal destination for large-scale international gatherings, fairs and exhibitions.

Elimination of almost all bureaucratic procedures for admittance of foreign patients to receive treatment in Turkish hospitals contributed to the steady growth of the health tourism sector. Furthermore the redesigning of environmental protection policies has fostered development in newly discovered eco-tourism opportunities.

▲ Turkey is the 6th most popular tourist destination in the world with an ever-increasing number of visitors. From 2007 to 2012,

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Iran says

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number of four- and five-star hotels, for which the government plans to offer incentives for investors to build.

"The government is ready to provide low-cost loan facilities out of the National Development Fund to investors," Soltanifar said. "There is a strong government will to help promote tourism and good coordination is being developed among all sectors to make that happen," he said.

Ebrahim Pourfaraj, a leading tour organizer, said all four- and five-star hotels at Iran's three major tourist-

destination cities of Isfahan, Shiraz and Yazd have been sold out for 2014 and are now being booked for 2015.

One factor driving the surge is cost: Iran's currency, the rial, has fallen sharply in value over the past years under international sanctions over Tehran's disputed nuclear program. That makes top Iranian hotels cheaper compared to those in other countries, with a room at a four-star hotel in Yazd for example costing about US\$100 a night.

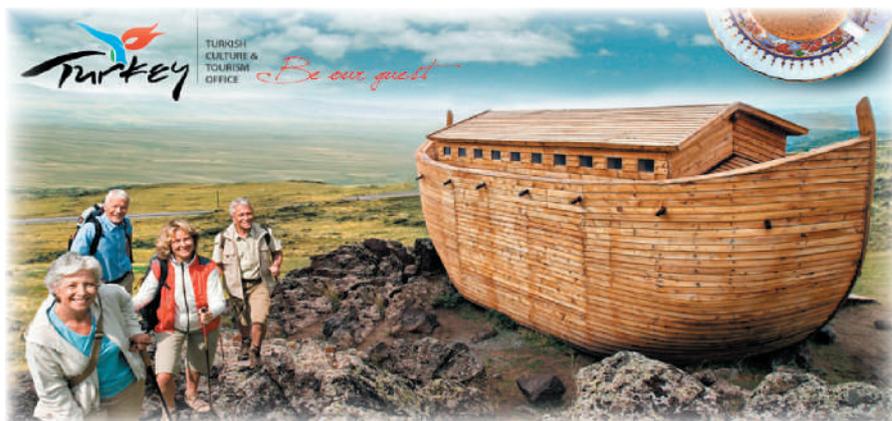
Source: Agence France-Presse (AFP), October 20, 2014 ❁

Tourism in Turkey

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the number of international tourist arrivals increased 37 percent, reaching more than 31.5 million foreign visitors.

- ▲ The Turkish tourism industry has grown above the global average in recent years and the direct contribution of the industry to the GDP reached USD 30 billion in 2012.
- ▲ The tourism sector targets 60 million tourist arrivals and revenues of USD 80 billion by 2023.
- ▲ Istanbul Atatürk Airport had more than 45 million visitors in 2012, of which 29 million were passengers on international flights.
- ▲ 25 million passengers flew to



Antalya Airport in 2012; 20 million of these passengers were passengers on international flights. Antalya Airport has more than 50 different airways flying from/to more than 75 destinations. Antalya Airport is ranked the 21st busiest airport in the

world by number of international passengers.

- ▲ In 2012, the number of airline passengers in Turkey exceeded 130 million. Istanbul is the 8th most popular convention destination with 128 congresses and conventions held in 2012. (International Congress and Convention Association - ICCA)
- ▲ In terms of geothermal tourism potential, Turkey is among the top seven countries in the world and ranks 2nd in Europe with its 1,300 thermal springs. Bed availability in thermal vacation resorts has reached 35,000.
- ▲ Turkey has 7,200 km of coastline and offers beautiful beaches; has 355 blue flag-beaches and ranks 4th among 38 countries. There are also 19 blue flag-marinas in Turkey.
- ▲ Turkey is an emerging destination for golf tourism, with 15 operation licensed golf tourism facilities. Most golf courses in Turkey use Bermuda grass, which is perfect for a Mediterranean climate and can be used for more than a decade.

Source: Invest in Turkey



About CACCI Asian Council on Tourism

Asian Council of Tourism is one of the Product Service Councils under the CACCI umbrella. The PSCs have been formed with the primary aim of promoting greater business interaction among CACCI members who are in the same product or service line. There are currently twelve PSCs that are operating within the CACCI umbrella.

The PSCs meet at least once a year, usually in conjunction with the Annual CACCI Conference held in various member countries. Occasionally, officers and key members of the PSCs conduct teleconferences to discuss their activities for the year.

CACCI held its first breakout

session on Tourism during the 60th CACCI Council Meeting held on 18-19 May 2004 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia and formally organized a CACCI Asian Council on Tourism (ACT).

The current Chairman of ACT is Mr. Anura Samarawickrema Lokuhetty from Sri Lanka. He is concurrently Chairman of Red Apple Travel & Holidays Lanka (Pvt) Ltd., and Immediate Past President of The Hotels Association of Sri Lanka, the apex body representing all hotels in Sri Lanka.

For more information on the PSCs, please visit the CACCI website at www.cacci.org.tw and go to the "Product and Service Councils" page.

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