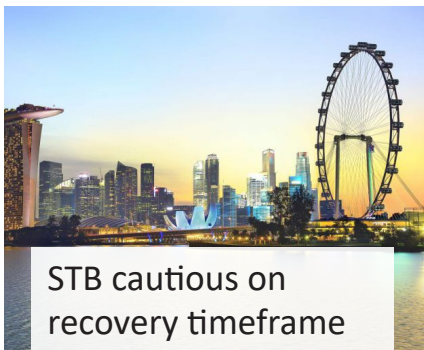




Thailand's Lanta goes top-of-mind



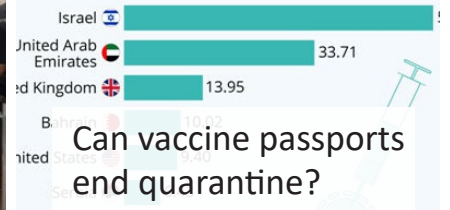
STB cautious on recovery timeframe



Acts of goodness in Langkawi amid the pandemic

The Countries With The Highest Rate Of Covid-19 Vaccination

Covid-19 vaccination doses administered per 100 people in 30-31, 2021)*



Can vaccine passports end quarantine?

STB cautious on recovery timeframe

Singapore's tourism sector tapped domestic demand while supporting national efforts against Covid-19, but 2021 recovery will be slow.

Singapore's visitor arrivals fell by 85.7 in 2020 to reach 2.7 million visitors (nearly all from the first two months of 2020), while tourism receipts declined by 78.4% to SGD4.4 billion in the first three quarters of 2020.

In its year-end review posted online this week, Singapore Tourism Board concedes 2020 was the toughest year on record, but its tourism sector took strides to reimagine offerings and experiences while supporting nationwide efforts to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic.

Singapore Tourism Board chief executive Keith Tan pledged: "While mass international travel is unlikely to resume in a major way in 2021, STB

will continue standing together with our industry partners to prepare for recovery and to start building a better and more sustainable future for tourism."

Battling Covid-19

Hotels and tourism businesses played a key role in Singapore's battle against Covid-19. Hotels offered their properties for various accommodation purposes, including Government Quarantine Facilities, Swab Isolation Facilities and Stay-Home Notice Dedicated Facilities (SDFs). More than 70 hotels have served as SDFs at various points in since March 2020. As of 31 December 2020, SDFs have accommodated more than 80,000 Persons on Stay-Home Notice, with the support of over 2,300 frontline workers in the hotel industry.

Reopening tourism safely

As of 25 January 2021, 45

attractions, 270 hotels, and 1,686 tour itineraries have received approval to resume operations.

From November 2020, Singapore also piloted cruises with enhanced safety protocols and no ports of call for two of Singapore's homeported cruise lines – Genting Cruise Lines and Royal Caribbean International. To rebuild consumer confidence and demand for cruises, STB established the world's first CruiseSafe Certification – a mandatory audit and certification programme for cruise lines before they commence sailing. As of 31 December 2020, 33 cruises carrying over 42,000 passengers have been completed with no reported incidents of Covid-19 transmission on board.

Domestic tourism a lifesaver

With international travel

at a standstill, domestic demand became critical to support tourism businesses. In July 2020, STB, Enterprise Singapore and Sentosa Development Corporation rolled out the SingapoRediscovered campaign to rally locals to support tourism businesses and promote hidden gems and experiences in Singapore. As of 31 December 2020, there were 1,145 promotions offered by 213 merchants.

To complement the SingapoRediscovered campaign, STB launched the SGD320 million SingapoRediscovered Vouchers (SRV) scheme in December 2020. As of 1 January 2021, over 300,000 Singaporeans had used the SRV scheme to make bookings with Singapore hotels, attractions and tours, spending SGD35.9 million in SRV redemptions and out-of-pocket payments.

Follow us on:



TTR Weekly is a controlled circulation newspaper for the travel industry specialising in Thailand and the Mekong region. Published every Wednesday, alternatively in English, the publication is distributed free to travel agents. Available on subscription outside this qualifying category. Published by Ross Publishing Ltd.

Managing editor: Don Ross: donr@ttrweekly.com

EDITORIAL: news@rossttr.com
Editor: Don Ross

MARKETING: sales@ttrweekly.com
Content editor: Danai Stephen Ross
Publishing director: Lars Magnusson

PRODUCTION:
Creative director: Danai Stephen Ross
Graphics: Suradej Chatsomsiri,
Kamolapat Srivirawan

Can vaccine passports end quarantine?

More proposals to fast track tourism recovery focus on ending quarantine, but will jab passports do the trick

Thailand's Minister of Tourism is lobbying hard to allow vaccinated tourists to visit the country without a 14-day quarantine.

He talks about getting the measure approved by April or May and that once in place it could spell recovery for Thailand with tourist arrivals lifting off from ground zero to between 5 to 10 million by the end of the year.

But for Thailand accepting tourists who have been vaccinated is one matter while travellers having reliable proof they have received the required jabs and are now immune to SARS-CoV-19 virus is an entirely different matter.

The big push globally focuses on countries recognising a vaccine certificate or passport and how to distribute them, either through an app or in print, to those who have been vaccinated.

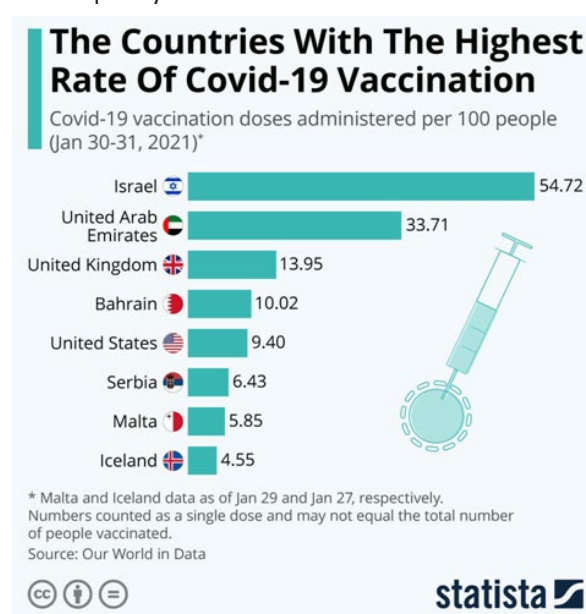
Printing of millions of blank certificates even to just cover those who intend to travel and have a passport would be an expensive task. For a soft (app) or hard certification (print) to be trustworthy, it would require a single recognised and internationally approved template, just like our passports. As for the minister's timeline, we might ask. How long will it take for governments to accept that vaccinated travellers can cross borders without quarantine? How long will it take to have in place jab certificates that comply with a recognised template to demonstrate they are genuine?

Already there are fraudsters

around the world printing certificates of entry, fit-to-fly letters and even false PCR test results that look pretty authentic with all the right boxes ticked. In London, they sell the bogus certificates with impunity at the entrances

given a vaccine passport in the form of a QR code, and Denmark is also moving ahead with a similar system that will enable travel." The UK is considering an app, but like all the proposals, there are security and fraud concerns. So even if Thailand's

Minister of Tourism succeeds the chances of countries having certificates available and enough vaccinated citizens ready travel by April is slim indeed. If jab certification is the solution, it would be better to join international efforts to introduce a single recognisable immunisation certificate or passport accepted



of Heathrow's terminal buildings according to a recent BBC report.

There's plenty of scepticism on the subject. Public health experts raise concerns because vaccinated people may still spread the virus. It would also penalise those who object to vaccination leading to a form of social discrimination.

For obvious reasons, tourist destinations like Spain, Greece, Portugal and Cyprus would support the vaccine certification push. On the other hand, France, which has experienced higher levels of vaccine scepticism has already rejected the idea, ABC News reported last week.

It reported that "Cyprus would abolish quarantine rules for travellers, if they were vaccinated, by March. In Poland, citizens who receive a second jab will soon be

by the World Health Organisation's member countries.

Statista reports that "early efforts to secure vaccine candidates, quick approval progress by authorities and effective infrastructure for administration, means governments are already racing ahead in their efforts to start mass vaccination against Covid-19.

"Website 'Our World in Data', keeps tabs on the jabs and its findings show that Israel leads the race to reach the 60 to 70% threshold needed to suppress the spread of Covid-19. As of late January, Israel administered 54.72 doses per 100 citizens, some 4.7 million. That is the highest rate of Covid-19 vaccination so far, considerably more than second-placed UAE's 33.7 doses per 100.

Thailand's Lanta goes top-of-mind

From face mask to snorkelling mask, Thailand's Koh Lanta is a destination that is ready to welcome guests safely as we head for a post-Covid-19 era and those vaccines kick-in.

We are still experiencing severe disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and the pain of social distancing to varying degrees depending on our lifestyle and family connections, but we have seen the light at the end of the tunnel. Vaccine programmes are rolling out and travel to our favourite destinations will resume soon. For now, we wait and see or muse over the making of a travel wish-list. But there is a growing sense of hope that the vaccine rollout and more robust testing pre-flight will signal that 2021 will be a



turning point; the big comeback for international travel.

Today, choosing a destination for your next trip might still be complicated and involve restrictions, but research shows that top-of-mind are holiday themes that evolve from keywords: Sea-Sun-Sand, Unspoiled Nature,

Delightfully Exotic Island, Pristine Beaches, Turquoise Blue Ocean, Krabi, Andaman Coast, and South Thailand.

In South Thailand on the coast of the Andaman Sea Lanta Island is

From urban clutter to clarity of nature

Lanta's geography is typically mangroves; coral-rimmed beaches; and tree-covered hills which allow visitors to enjoy outdoor activities



emerging as a destination that fits the keywords.

Lanta's travel season usually starts early October, while the favourite time for holiday-goers to visit the island's exquisite beaches runs from November to March.

Since 1 July 2020, Mu Koh Lanta National Park remained partially open for visitors to enjoy its undisturbed natural scenery of Laem Tanot (Tanot Cape) at the southeast end of the island. All the visitors were Thais and expatriates living in Thailand, but that will change in 2021 as vaccines come into play and rules governing travel ease.

and be embraced by nature.

Choices of ecotourism activities to enjoy at Koh Lanta include diving, snorkelling, kayaking, birdwatching, and trekking. Choose one or do it all to pay off what you've been through during the time you're being stuck at home.

Face mask to snorkelling mask

Though the face mask is a travel essential on arrival on Koh Lanta, you are more likely to be wearing a snorkelling mask to explore the island's marine habitats at the time when ecosystem returned to its



flights, ferries and land transfers. For those who decide to travel by car, you board the car ferry operating from the mainland to Koh Lanta Noi at Baan Hua Hin, located around 75 km from Krabi town. Once on Koh Lanta Noi, you take a short drive to the bridge that spans the channel between Lanta Noi and Lanta Yai where most of the travel attractions and resorts are located. Airline passengers can pre-book a shuttle minivan services from Krabi Airport to Koh Lanta with the Bus Co-operative of Krabi. But you may prefer to take a ferry from Krabi

best recovery due to the absence of human activities in the recent months.

From laptop screen to sunset scenery

It is the right time to let the pristine natural beach scenery to relieve your eye strain from hours of staring at mobile, tablet or laptop screens. Koh Lanta offers perfect spots to view the beautiful sunset over the sea from all nine beaches which lie along its 30 km-long north-to-south coastlines. Famous beaches on Koh Lanta include Kantiang Bay, Klong Dao, Klong Khong, Phra Ae and Khlong Nin. Let the sand be your seat, and enjoy the panoramic sunset views.

From teleconference to local experience

Enough of Zoom, Skype, WebEx Meeting, LINE Conference calls, or any teleconference activities. Leave your laptop in the room and go out to interact with locals. Koh Lanta is home to a multicultural community with groups of sea gypsy, Thai-Chinese, and Thai-Muslims who have lived together in peace and harmony for hundreds of years. Visitors will be able to experience sea gypsy traditions and ancient trade histories at the Old Lanta Town dating back hundreds of years.



From food delivery services to local food treats

Seafood is probably the best choice when dining on the island. Koh Lanta is packed with seafood restaurants from five-star to homely shoreline shacks that mesmerize you with their culinary talent. Whether it is a hammock-and-cocktail BBQ dinner style or a fancy dinner style at a private resort where famed chefs serve seafood fusion dishes crafted with western and local gastronomic traditions, there are no poor choices when seafood is on your menu during a stay on Koh Lanta.

How to get there

To reach Lanta the choices are

town's Chao Pha Pier, located about 13km from Krabi Airport. During the high season, from November to May, the ferry usually operates two services daily. The 50-km ferry trip to Baan Saladan Pier on Koh Lanta Yai takes two hours. Travellers transferring from Phuket join the ferry at the Rassada Pier. There are two daily services on the Phuket-Phi Phi-Koh Lanta route. Due to the Covid-19, it is necessary to double-check the operator's schedule before planning the trip. The new normal may take more time to navigate but the day is fast coming when you will once more be checking in at a beach resort and posting your seafood photos on Instagram.

[Click for full report.](#)

Acts of goodness in Langkawi amid the pandemic

Langkawi's communities go the extra mile to show appreciation for medical frontliners and extend a helping hand to residents in need

One thing we have learned from the pandemic is that kindness still prevails in challenging times, and it is evident on Malaysia's top holiday island Langkawi where the communities are supporting each other.

Here is a compilation of kind souls in Langkawi who spread love through actions even during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Lunches for medical personnel

During the nation-wide Movement Control Order, Langkawi Development Authority (LADA) joined forces with the office of

the frontliners who constantly face pandemic challenges.

Tailoring for the heroes

Forty-eight tailors from around Langkawi joined forces to sew PPE for medical use at Hospital Sultanah Maliha and Klinik Kesihatan Kuah.



They did not know each other before this venture, which is an initiative mooted by Madam Norhayati Hassan through her Facebook page that drew everyone together. Madam Long Lee Ket offered space at her tailor's shop for other tailors on the island to team up and start sewing. In total, they have made 500 pieces of full suited PPE which they donated to the hospital and clinic.

The Good Campaign Langkawi

A project that first started last May, involves a community group on the island that gives food packages to locals and stranded tourists. A lot of hotel workers, part-time tour operators and foreign residents and long-stay visitors have lost their source of income. Through public donations, the group has given out more than 2,000 food hampers.

"Good Tickets valid for entrance to attractions on the island are also distributed along with the essential food items. These community efforts are ongoing and reflect Langkawi's caring spirit for residents and visitors staying on the island during a time of crisis.

Y-Connect Foodbank Project

This community-led initiative distributes food to families in need. Donors and volunteers joined hands since last October to give out necessities like rice, canned food, cooking oil and more. They have also travelled to Tuba Island, a smaller island off Langkawi, to hand out supplies.

Food Bank Chenang

Formed by Chenang Volunteer (a local NGO), in collaboration with The Cabin Langkawi, this food bank project receives donated food from the public. It redistributes food packages to the needy around Langkawi, especially those who work in the tourism industry. Since early November 2020, they have been stationed in front of The Cabin Langkawi from 10 am to 10 pm, handing out food parcels.



Member of Parliament and other NGOs to support medical frontliners at the hospital. Together, they provided free lunches for 200 hospital personnel. Although it was a small token of appreciation, they hope that this act will motivate



The Best Tropical Karst Island in the World

Naturally Inspired: Langkawi

Naturally
LANGKAWI



An aerial photograph of a stunning tropical coastline. The water is a vibrant turquoise, transitioning to a deeper blue further out. Lush green hills with dense vegetation line the shore. Several boats are visible: a small white boat in the distance, a larger white boat with a blue roof, a small motorboat, and a red boat with a white roof in the foreground. A rocky, forested peninsula is visible on the left. The text "Amazing moments await you in Amazing Thailand." is written in a white, cursive font across the middle of the image.

Amazing moments await you
in Amazing Thailand.