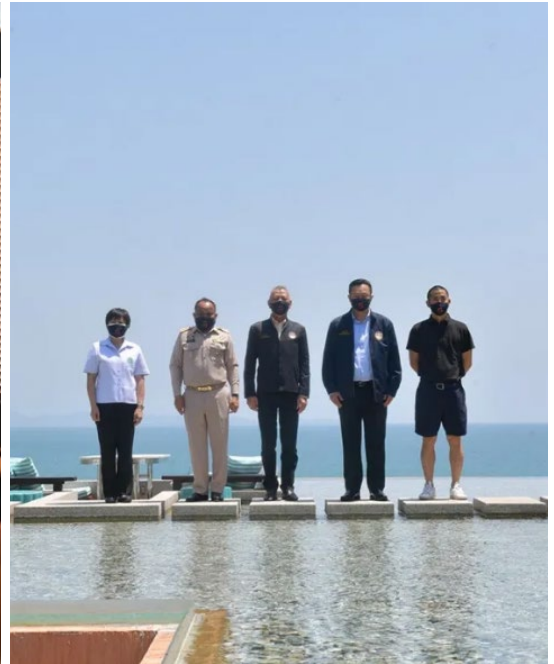




Thailand's first villa quarantine takes off.



Spring break fares on Emirates.



MATTA backs early cruise return.



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HKTb sets out recovery steps.

Spring break fares on Emirates

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airline's award-winning inflight entertainment system, along regionally inspired gourmet meals.

Emirates continues to

initiatives such as flexible booking policies, multi-risk insurance cover, and helping loyal customers retain their miles and tier status.

The airline provides the latest information on its COVID-19 information hub, including entry requirements, travel restrictions and all its initiatives for customer wellbeing.

For more information on Emirates, including how to book flights and a



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Seychelles	Starting from AED 3,495	Starting from AED 9,955
Amman	Starting from AED 1,995	Starting from AED 6,995
Istanbul	Starting from AED 1,595	Starting from AED 9,995
Moscow	Starting from AED 2,355	Starting from AED 9,995

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MATTA backs early cruise return

Malaysia's leading travel agency association pushes for domestic cruises to help revive tourism.

Malaysia's Ministry of Transport is actively discussing SOPs with the National Security Council in order to resume domestic cruises, according to the Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents (MATTA).

MATTA president Datuk Tan Kok Liang said: "MATTA has been working very closely with industry partners like Costa Crociere SPA's Singapore office and the Ministry of Tourism Arts and Culture to kickstart domestic cruises to revive the ailing tourism sector."

Cruises to nowhere have already been launched in Singapore and have been successful in providing much-needed stimulus to the local economy. Similar cruises have been introduced in Taiwan, while cruises in the UK will also resume on 17 May.

"MATTA has long recognized the immense potential of the cruise industry, which benefits not only travel agencies but also hotels, the aviation sector, theme parks, attractions, retail and many other tourism-related industries."

"A single ship, like the Costa Venezia, with a capacity of 5,000 passengers, can generate revenue of up to MYR60 million. In addition to that, domestic cruises, especially during these trying times, have the potential to generate thousands of jobs almost immediately, especially in port cities like Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Langkawi and Melaka.", he added.

MATTA honorary secretary-general Nigel Wong added: "We have been engaging the relevant ministries for years not just on the implementation of domestic

cruises as a quick-win solution during these trying times but more importantly the benefits of having Malaysia recognized as a home-port destination."



"We already have the necessary infrastructure and manpower in place to serve this emerging and profitable sector – the long-term benefits of having home-port status are immense, especially since Malaysia is recognized worldwide as a very modern and progressive Muslim-friendly destination."

"Tourists from all over the globe

will fly into Malaysia to embark on their cruise holiday and, in the process, will very likely extend their stay in Malaysia. Needless to say, one can only imagine the untapped

potential we have at our fingertips."

"We would like to commend both the Ministry of Tourism Arts and Culture and the Ministry of Transportation in their efforts to open up this industry – MATTA will continue to spearhead this effort and work closely with all relevant ministries to make this dream a reality", Wong concluded.

AirAsia reinstates all Thai services

AirAsia ready to reinstate all 40 domestic routes in Thailand starting April.

AirAsia confirms it will restart 40 domestic routes in Thailand this April, signifying a solid return to pre-Covid-19 performance levels for the airline.

The resumption of services includes all flights from Bangkok's two airports, Suvarnabhumi and Don Mueang, and 14 routes across the nation.

AirAsia Thailand Chief Executive

Officer, Santisuk Klongchaiya, said: "AirAsia increases flights in view of the improved situation."

From 1 April, it will be increase frequency on popular routes, such as from Don Mueang to Chiang Mai with 13 daily flights, Phuket (11 daily), Hat Yai (eight daily flights), Surat Thani (six daily flights) and five daily flights to Chiang Rai, Khon Kaen and Udon Thani respectively. AirAsia will also reinstate five routes from Suvarnabhumi Airport to Chiang Mai, Nan, Phuket, Hat Yai and Nakhon Si Thammarat.

Thailand's first villa quarantine takes off

Thailand successfully completes first Villa Quarantine pilot project a blueprint for larger area quarantine model planned for April.

The first group of 58 travellers successfully completed the first Villa Quarantine pilot project last

covers five provinces favoured by international travellers – Phuket, Krabi, Surat Thani (Samui, Ko Phangan and Tao island), Chiang Mai and Chon Buri (Pattaya). Tourists could potentially spend between one to three months at the stated destinations.

with several options for the 14-day mandatory quarantine, including the Alternative State Quarantine or ALQ, Organizational Quarantine or OQ options, which include Villa Quarantine and the Alternative Yacht Quarantine or AYQ. In addition, Phuket is providing the Alternative Hospital Quarantine or AHQ for international patients, both Thai and non-Thai nationals."

Currently, there are 24 ALQ hotels in Phuket and one OQ hotel with a capacity of 2,752 rooms. To ensure the high contingency standards of Thailand's quarantine system, these hotels are working together with eight local hospitals – Bangkok Hospital Phuket, Bangkok Hospital Siriroj, Mission Hospital Phuket, Wachira Hospital Phuket, Patong Hospital, Thalang Hospital, Chalong Hospital, and Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation Hospital. Meanwhile, the AHQ is available at Bangkok Hospital Phuket and Bangkok Hospital Siriroj.

TAT Governor Yuthasak Supasorn said: "The success of the Villa Quarantine provides a working blueprint for area quarantine tourism operators who are ready to follow and enforce a strict set of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). It will create both direct and indirect income in each province and start the rehabilitation of Thai tourism."

The Villa Quarantine pilot project is part of the Thai government's Organisational Quarantine (OQ) category that authorised TAT to trial with Sri Panwa Phuket. Guests were not allowed out of their rooms for the first five days until the second negative Covid-19 test result. After which, they were free to participate some leisure activities,



week and are now free to embark on a one-month tour of the country, the Tourism Authority of Thailand announced at the weekend.

The Villa Quarantine project unfolded at the Sri Panwa Phuket, endorsed by the Centre for Covid-19 Situation Administration (CCSA). It now paves the way for the launch of a larger area quarantine initiative that is tentatively scheduled from April to May 2021.

Minister of Tourism and Sports Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn said: "The Villa Quarantine pilot project successfully allowed tourists to travel and experience Thailand. It shows confidence in Thailand's public health system... and allows the Ministry to now push through the 'area quarantine' for final approval."

The proposed 'area quarantine'

The Ministry has recommended that the vaccination programme include tourism personnel in the five provinces with 50,000 doses of the vaccine allocated for hotel staff. It has also sought cooperation from the Ministry of Public Health to allocate an additional 5 million doses that would be available in the third quarter for 2.5 million residents in Phuket, Krabi, Surat Thani, Chiang Mai, and Chon Buri. This is in preparation for the start of 'vaccine passport' tourism for inoculated travellers originating from low-risk countries.

Phuket governor Narong Wunsiew said: "The success of the Villa Quarantine has shown that Phuket has the ability to safely welcome more visitors to the island. Currently, Phuket is facilitating international arrivals

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HKTb sets out recovery steps

The Hong Kong Tourism Board announces strategies to drive tourism recovery..

The Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTb) announced flexible short to long-term strategies to prepare for the return of high-yield visitors at the weekend.

“Despite the start of vaccinations against Covid-19 worldwide, the pandemic situation remains volatile and unpredictable,” said HKTb executive director Dane Cheng. “We consider it unlikely Hong Kong will see a full resumption of cross-border travel in the next three to six months. However, we do expect it to be possible for Hong Kong to welcome tourists from selected markets.”

“In formulating our strategies for 2021/2022, we focused on two major areas. Firstly, we saw a need to offer support to the trade and boost the ambience in Hong Kong while ensuring the city has continued exposure on the international stage ahead of the resumption of international travel.

Secondly, we anticipate competition for tourists will be intense once the pandemic is over, with rival markets going to great lengths to bring visitors back. The HKTb is therefore setting aside resources for large-scale promotions so that Hong Kong will stand out against competing destinations.”

Cheng stressed that the HKTb would maintain a flexible approach and be prudent in its use of resources while the pandemic continued.

“Most of our additional funding of more than HK\$700 million for 2020/21 has not been used

because of the pandemic, and the remainder will be returned in full to the Government,” he said. “For 2021/22, the HKTb will receive additional funding of HK\$765 million, similar to the amount



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allocated in the last financial year.”

The HKTb will have a marketing budget of HKD1,138 million for the 2021/22 financial year, including recurrent funding.

Short-term strategies (35%)

Focusing on bringing back visitors to Hong Kong as soon as possible, the HKTb has been boosting local consumption and encouraging locals to explore the city. When the pandemic situation has stabilized, the organization will launch a new Spend-to-Redeem program called “Staycation Delights” to offer an additional option for Hong Kong people to enjoy more experiences local tourism has to offer.

Launch a large-scale promotional platform called “Open House Hong Kong” when cross-border travel gradually resumes. The campaign will leverage exclusive experiences, and citywide offers to drum up visitors’ desire to travel to Hong Kong.

Revamp its Mainland strategies and will increase marketing resources for the Greater Bay Area (GBA) to attract visitors to travel to Hong Kong for leisure.

Medium-to-long-term strategies (40%)

Capturing the high-yield visitor segment is a top-of-the agenda item, with HKTb conducting a review of Hong Kong’s tourism brand and positioning. The organization will formulate a long-term promotional strategy for the sustainable development of the local tourism sector. When cross-border travel gradually resumes, HKTb will launch large-scale promotions on the new tourism brand on multiple channels, including digital platforms in source markets worldwide, together with partnerships with major international media outlets to present Hong Kong’s reinvented tourism image.

Join hands with other cities in the GBA to globally promote and build the GBA tourism brand.

Create and enhance a digitally-enabled travel experience for visitors through a one-stop e-solution platform.

Ongoing initiatives (25%)

Supporting the travel trade and maintaining Hong Kong’s international exposure continues with participation in trade events to help hasten their business recovery.

The board will strengthen support for the MICE and cruise sectors and their promotions and bid to host more international conferences in Hong Kong. It will provide support for the resumption of cruise tourism when the global situation has stabilized. Visit <https://www.discoverhongkong.com/us/index.html>



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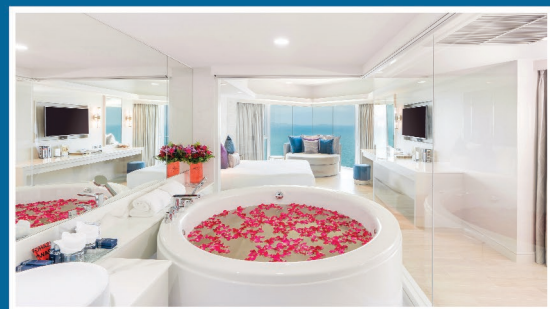


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