



Kuching ready to welcome cycle enthusiasts



TCEB's virtual expo adds up



Airbnb tracks Thai travels during Covid



India Tourism reconnects in Asean

TCEB's virtual expo adds up

TCEB's first 'MICE virtual expo gained the registrations and fielded high-content webinars to live up to its billing

If numbers measure success, then Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau foray into virtual events was spot on target, having logged more than 7,700 registered participants at the inaugural Thailand MICE Virtual Expo held 24 to 25 February.

TCEB claimed an attendance of 178 buyers who networked online with 30 Thai exhibitors accounting for 580 business-matching sessions in a post-event assessment. The event held eight industry webinars and eight cultural workshops on the sidelines. Overall registration reached 7,755 from 33 countries participated.

TCEB president, Chiruit Isarangkun Na Ayuthaya,

noted: "Exhibitors at TCEB's Thailand MICE Virtual Expo appreciated the opportunity to connect with international buyers during this

time of uncertainty and separation. It was important for all of us in MICE to continue building relationships with prospective clients so

that Thailand remains an attractive and promising destination in our client's consciousness."

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Airbnb tracks Thai travels during Covid

Meaningful vacations with family and friends to define Thai domestic travel in 2021: Airbnb.

Thais want to reconnect with family and friends, enjoy short getaways, and seek affordable and safe travel in places close to nature this 2021, according to Airbnb's Meaningful Travel Trends Survey 2021.

Compiled in cooperation with the global data analytics firm YouGov, the survey explores the travel preferences and behaviours of Thais during 2021 during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.*

Travel with immediate family emerged as the top reason for domestic travel amongst Thais. The pandemic appears to have strengthened the ties of families, with 68% of all respondents saying they felt more connected with their families while staying at home and less connected to their friends. This was reflected in their choice of travel companions, with almost half (47%) saying they plan to travel with immediate family for their first trip, followed by couple vacations, solo vacations and then group vacations with friends.

Thais are also seeking affordable and safe travel options that make them feel at home. Respondents ranked affordability as the top consideration that will shape their choice of travel destinations and accommodations this year. Promotions and discounts on accommodation were vital factors along with reasonable travel fares.

Accommodation options that provide personal touches and a sense of feeling at home came in a close second, followed by health and safety considerations (Covid-19 situation on the ground, local health and safety protocols etc.). The

majority of respondents are willing to spend THB5,000 to 15,000 on travel this year, with respondents aged 55+ comprising the largest group willing to spend more than THB50,000.

Quick getaways and nature retreats are likely to gain traction this year. When polled about the ideal duration for their next



domestic trip, 74% of respondents indicated they were keen to travel between one to three nights. They also sought domestic destinations that were close to nature and with good weather. Sustainable travel is another priority, with 73% saying they often consider the environment and sustainability when choosing destinations and accommodations.

"2021 will see a shift toward more meaningful and purposeful

travel as the pandemic continues to limit mass travel. We believe that Thais' strong desire to connect with their loved ones in affordable, family-friendly destinations will serve as a driving force for domestic tourism recovery, especially with key travel moments like Songkran on the horizon. Travel is resilient and will bounce back, and we are dedicated to supporting Thailand's domestic and international tourism recovery in the long term," said Airbnb general manager Southeast Asia, Hong Kong and Taiwan, Amanpreet Bajaj.

Last year, an Oxford Economics report, titled The Economic Impact of Airbnb in Thailand, found that Airbnb

remained a valuable pillar of the local economy in 2019, contributing THB43.7 billion to Thailand's gross domestic product (GDP) and supporting over 113,300 local jobs in Thailand alone. The report highlighted how Airbnb could play a key role to rejuvenate Thai tourism, support local communities and create tens of thousands of local jobs.

**Airbnb and YouGov surveyed a total of 2037 Thais between 4-8 February 2021.*

Kuching gets ready to welcome cyclists

As we prepare for travel to reopen, Sarawak ticks all the boxes for the post-Covid era with trending green tours, nature and family travel.

Travel to Kuching, the capital of Sarawak State, Malaysia, is closed to international travellers, but educated guesses suggest it only



months away from reopening as vaccination programmes around the world begin to make an impact.

Surveys that monitor the latest trends in trip bookings favour green experiences, nature and family adventure in the post-Covid era. That could be good news for Kuching's cycle tour companies that are suffering almost zero business at present.

Cycling tours of the 'Land of the Hornbills' are promoted on the state's tourism website www.sarawaktourism.com highlighting curated rides to heritage sites, quaint, rural villages alongside dense jungles, mighty rivers and mountains often shrouded in mist.

A cycling tour's slow pace is ideal for visitors to witness Sarawak's unique wildlife, nature and culture

up close.

For newcomers to the cycling holiday craze, Kuching is the perfect



starting point to introduce a family to easy and pain-free cycling routes and tours. You can explore scenic routes at your own pace or in a group led by an experienced guide. Both options are available in Kuching. If you are feeling a little apprehensive at the thought of riding a bike in a Malaysian city, fret not because Sarawakians are the most considerate drivers in Malaysia. Start on the riverside boulevard and then explore the lanes leading from the river to Chinatown or cross the river to explore Malay villages.

Here is a list of tour operators offering a range of guided tours. Check them out and start early preparing for the day when family holidays to Malaysia and particularly Sarawak are back on track.

Cycling resources penned by fellow cyclists

- Bikemap, Bikemap is an online platform where cyclists from all around the world share their cycling routes. Currently, there are more than 60 routes in Kuching, with another 17 in places like Miri and Sibü.
- 7 Routes to Ride on Western Sarawak's Back Roads and

Beaches

- Jay Blakeney, a Retired Canadian Forest Engineer and avid outdoors-man, shares seven unique routes on Sarawak's back roads and beaches.
- Ah Pek Biker – Old Dog Rides Again
- Check out this blog to read about his exciting cycling adventures around the world, including Kuching. It also has a lot of useful information about taking bikes on planes (which airlines charge and which ones don't) and tips such as tools not to be carried in hand luggage.

For a finely tuned cycle holiday led by a professional cycle tour company, check out the companies below.

- Paradesa Borneo, Wayang Street, 93000 Kuching, Sarawak.
Phone: 082-238801

Email: info@paradesaborneo.com

Paradesa Borneo offers various local cycling day tours as well as multi-day tours, which can be between three to 15 days

- Semadang Adventure
1st Floor, Batu Kawah New Township, Jalan Batu Kawah, 93250 Kuching, Sarawak
Phone: 010-63096899; 013-8042118
Email: info@semadangkayak.com

In addition to mountain biking, Semadang Adventure also features kayaking, caving and bamboo rafting adventures while also offering mixed packages such as the Semadang Kayaking & Mountain Biking expedition.

For the full report visit <https://sarawaktourism.com/story/a-bicycle-travellers-guide-to-kuching/>

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India Tourism reconnects in Asean

India Tourism Reconnects webinars and networking sessions build confidence among stakeholders as they prepare to reopen travel.

The India Tourism office, Singapore, organised a series of Webinars, India Tourism Reconnects for a B2B audience in the key ASEAN markets of The Philippines, Malaysia and Singapore.

The events reached out to stakeholders in key markets and initiating conversations and discussions once the reopening of markets gets underway.

Kumaran, Ambassador of India to the Philippines, presented the opening remarks, identifying the huge fascination and admiration for



industry will bounce back, she noted.

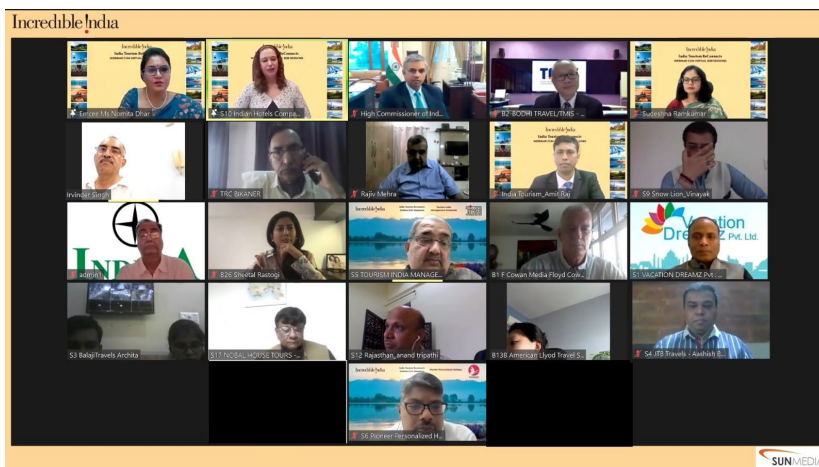
The final event in the series, 18 March, focused on tourism to India from Singapore, reaching out to travel trade stakeholders. H.E. Shri P. Kumaran, High Commissioner of India to Singapore, elaborated on the potential and opportunities that could be tapped to attract discerning Singaporean

travellers once the tourism traffic resumes.

During each of the webinars, India Tourism Singapore recognised that while normal international travel had still to resume, there had been an upswing in the confidence of domestic travellers in India over the last few months and several destinations had once more seen a high volume of domestic tourists.

Presentations were also given by representatives of Indian luxury hotel groups such as The Taj and the Oberoi, as well as the Indian Association of Tour Operators on the various steps taken by the tourism industry in India during the pandemic and their preparations for receiving foreign tourists once the borders reopen.

Over 300 virtual meetings convened between Indian and foreign tour operators and stakeholders during the series prompting participating organisations to express confidence that the webinars had successfully reconnected stakeholders and taken business relationships forward.



Participation involved the respective Indian Missions, India Tourism and the private stakeholders representing specific tourism products.

Following the webinars, 17 seller-participants from India, which included state tourism departments, leading Indian hotels and destination management companies, interacted with the local trade in one-to-one B2B sessions.

The series kick-started with the first webinar cum B2B session for the Philippines travel industry, 11 March. H.E. Shri Shambhu S.

Indian culture, food as well as the holistic Indian way of healthcare, including Ayurveda and Yoga.

More than 60 members of the Malaysian travel trade interacted with around 17 sellers from India during the second virtual B2B and webinar session on 16 March 2021. The Deputy High Commissioner of India to Malaysia, Archana Nair stated that the timely initiative of the webinar would serve to attract Malaysian visitors to India as and when travel resumes. As the world emerges from the pandemic, there is a definite optimism that the travel

<http://www.incredibleindia.org/>



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