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NEWS FOR ASIA'S TRAVEL PLANNERS

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Catching the sunrise – trekking in Bali



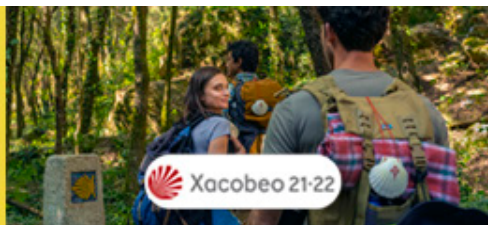
Central Plaza names
new CFO

WebBeds

WebBeds powers up
for recovery



MATTA: Tourism on
the verge of collapse



YOU DESERVE SPAIN

Central Plaza names new CFO

Central Plaza Hotel appoints Centara executive for the chief financial officer role.

Centara Hotels & Resorts promotes Gun Srisompong, the group's existing assistant vice president of finance and asset management, to the chief financial officer of parent company Central Plaza Hotel PLC (CENTEL).

In his new role at CENTEL, Gun will oversee all finance, accounting, investment, and investor relations matters of the Stock Exchange of Thailand-listed company and its subsidiaries.

Gun first joined Centara Hotels & Resorts in 2014, and during his tenure, he was in charge of corporate finance, asset management, and investor relations for the hotel group. His focus on capital structure optimisation, investment and fundraising was instrumental in the

strategic expansion of Centara's portfolio in both domestic and international destinations.

"Over the past six years at Centara, Gun



has on several occasions demonstrated strong vision and leadership in his role as Assistant Vice President of Finance and Asset Management. During his time with us, his team successfully redesigned the debt structure of Centara Hotels & Resorts, and he

also worked closely with our business development teams on new investment projects. I trust that in his new role, Gun will continue to drive business

42-year-old Thai national is also a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) and a Certified Public Accountant (Thailand) and previously worked as Senior Auditor at PricewaterhouseCoopers in Bangkok.

"I am honoured and excited to be taking on the chief financial officer position at CENTEL. In my new role, I look forward to continuing to steer the group through the economic impact of the pandemic while achieving strategic growth ambitions for our business," said Central Plaza Hotel PLC chief financial officer Gun Srisompong.

Gun holds an undergraduate degree in business administration from Thammasat University, where he majored in accounting and minored in finance, and a master's degree in applied finance from the University of Melbourne, Australia.

and create value for the company," said Centara Hotels & Resorts chief executive officer Thirayuth Chirathivat.

Prior to Centara, Gun spent nearly eight years working in investment banking at Kasikorn Securities and Kasikorn Bank. The

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Travel Safe



Xacobeo 21-22

WebBeds powers up for recovery

WebBeds, the B2B division of global online travel business Webjet Limited, is powering up for travel recovery, undertaking a transformation project to simplify the way it does business and provide enhanced support for partners as the industry heads towards recovery.

As countries swiftly implemented travel restrictions to contain Covid-19, WebBeds focussed on initiatives to ensure it could deliver immediate support and value to

offices in Saudi Arabia to focus on emerging opportunities within that region through the specialist brand Umrah Holidays International.

“Our underlying goals have not changed, but what we have been able to do is look at every aspect of our operation, review what we do well and what areas we could improve. The key driver has been simplification that drives efficiencies and makes it easier to do business with us.”

The simplification initiatives



its partners globally amidst rapidly changing environments.

“Recognising domestic markets would be the first to open, we took the strategic decision to pivot our contracting and sales efforts to focus on domestic travel, diversifying our business model, which in turn has strengthened our supplier relationships and further developed our global footprint,” said WebBeds CEO, Daryl Lee.

“Another immediate change has been the reorganisation of our geographical management structure, moving to four regions from three (separating MEA and the Americas) and introducing regional leadership reporting into one WebBeds CEO. This reaffirms our commitment to strong local market representation within our global footprint.” Lee said.

The company will open new

cover key business functions and services provided within WebBeds Global Marketplace, including delivery of a new WebBeds ERP and enhancements to WebBeds contracting module and connectivity technology.

WebBeds also created a new Global Product Group that will sit within the commercial side of the business, ensuring a greater focus on stakeholder engagement to ensure it delivers products and services that best suit supply and distribution partners’ needs.

In the near future, the simplification drive will extend to WebBeds booking sites, with the release of Single Sign-On access (SSO), enabling any client currently accessing more than one of WebBeds’ booking sites to do so from a single login page.

Lee said: “The last 18 months

have been devastating for our industry, but we know travel is resilient, and as soon as people can travel, they will. We see a world of opportunity and are working extremely hard to ensure our readiness to support our clients and supplier partners better than ever before amidst altered landscapes. We will be here to help facilitate growth and bring our industry together.”

Hilton names regional team leaders

Hilton announced Tuesday the appointment of Paul Hutton as head of Australasia, while Alexandra Murray will take on the same role in Southeast Asia.

Both leadership changes will be effective 1 January 2022.

Paul Hutton will succeed Heidi Kunkel, who has led the Australasia region over the past three and a half years. The move represents a return to the Australasia leadership role for Hutton, who spent the past four years as Hilton’s regional head of Southeast Asia.

He will be based in Sydney, where he will oversee 27 operating hotels and a development pipeline of 12 hotels and resorts in Australasia in the next five years.

Taking on the Southeast Asia leadership role, Alexandra (Alex) Murray will transfer from Hilton’s operations in Europe, Middle East & Africa (EMEA). Based in Singapore, she will oversee 46 open and trading hotels in the region, with a further 51 in the pipeline – including the largest Hilton hotel in the APAC region.

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Catching the sunrise – trekking in Bali

Off the beaten track walkabouts and hikes explore a different Bali experience.

Sandy beaches, rice paddies, ancient temples and magnificent mountains – these are just some teasers that hint at the beauty of Bali, best known as the Island of Gods.

Mount Batur Geopark is listed as UNESCO Global Geopark due to its unique geology. The volcano with its caldera, is one of the best spots to catch the sunrise in Bali.

Tips: Although this is a beginner-friendly trek, it is good to hire a private guide to know more about the history of the volcano, its significance in Balinese culture, and

plantation. If you are not interested, please make an enquiry with respective tours prior to sign-up.

Mount Agung

Unlike the previous mountains mentioned earlier, Mount Agung is the most challenging mountain, as it is the highest mountain in Bali, this active volcano stands at 3031 meters above sea level.

According to a local myth, Mount Agung is believed as the home of the Gods and has a huge spiritual significance to the Balinese. It is also where Pura Besakih (Bali's Hindu mother temple) is located.

The hike to Mount Agung is far from easy, as it requires a much higher level of fitness and mental discipline. To reach the summit, you need to walk on a narrow and steep ridge that has dangerous drop-offs on both sides. On average, the hike takes about 5 – 7 hours, depending on the location of departure points. (4-5 hours from Pura Pasar Agung, 6-7 hours from Besakih).

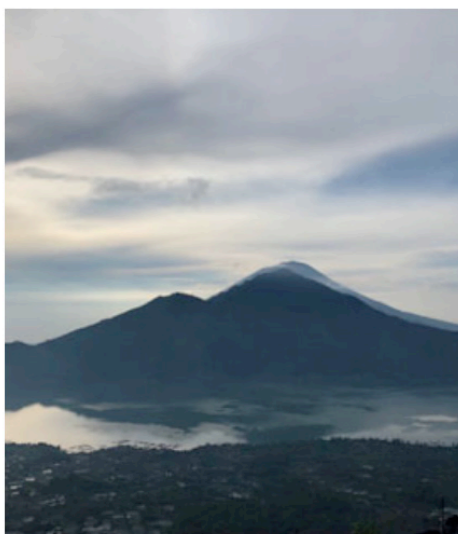
Once you reach the top of the mountain, you will be rewarded with stunning sunrise, one of the most picturesque views in Bali.

Tip: This hiking trek is a strenuous, tough climb and hikers start the journey near midnight in order to catch the sunrise, thus it is important to put on walking shoes with good grip, bring a flashlight and hiking stick. The temperatures can get quite chilly up there, so make sure to pack warm clothes (including gloves).

Where To Stay:

Hard Rock Hotel Bali

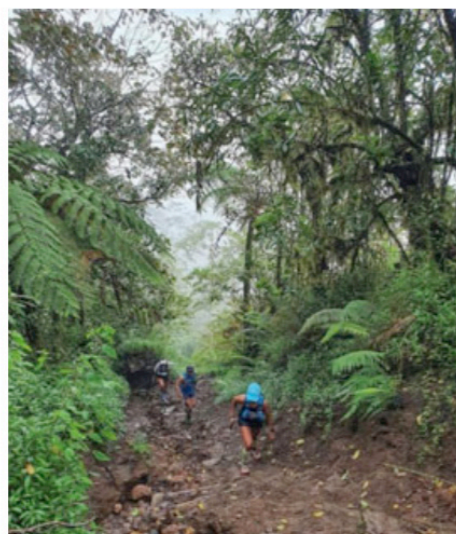
Located along the shores of Kuta Beach, right in the heart of Bali's entertainment.



A lesser know fact; Bali is a paradise for outdoor endeavours for hiking and trekking. East to west, the island is approximately 153 km (95 mi) wide and spans approximately 112 km (70 mi) north to south. Bali's central mountains include several peaks over 2,000 metres (6,600 feet) in elevation and active volcanoes such as Mount Batur. The highest is Mount Agung (3,031 m, 9,944 ft), known as the "mother mountain", which is an active volcano.

Mount Batur

Located north of Ubud, in the Kintamani area, Mount Batur is an active volcano with an altitude of 1717 metres above sea level.



the surrounding flora. After the hike, there are some hot springs nearby Lake Batur, perfect for relaxing the tired muscles.

Mount Abang

Mount Abang, located opposite Mount Batur, is the third highest peak in Bali; with a height of 2152 metres above sea level, hiking to the summit takes up about 2 to 3 hours. Once there, you will be surrounded by lush tropical rainforest and breezy fresh air.

The summit of Mount Abang offers an impressive view of the sunrise, and you can see Batur Lake and Mount Batur in the distance.

Tip: Most of the private tours include a visit to Luwak coffee

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MATTA: Tourism on the verge of collapse

An impassioned plea from MATTA's president calls on the Minister of Finance to put the plight of tourism companies top of mind.

Malaysia's tourism industry is on the verge of collapse and desperately needs a financial lifeline from the country's national budget 2022, according to the Malaysian

In 2019, Malaysia welcomed 26 million foreign tourists with an estimated revenue of MYR 89.1 billion, exceeding the exports of palm oil at MYR70 billion and rubber gloves at MYR22 billion.

"Don't ignore the industry now just because borders remain closed and because there is not much tourism activity. Our companies

borrowers directly impacted by the pandemic."

"We took business loans in 2020 in anticipation that the government will overcome the pandemic, but today, tourism activities remain restricted, and we are made to pay the bank instalments and interest with no revenue. How are we to sustain? The irony is that while the greater economy suffers, financial institutions are recording billions in profits during the pandemic."

"The Ministry of Finance needs to provide practical financial assistance beyond tax incentives or tax rebates or deferment of tax instalments which we are unable to benefit from because tourism companies have already accumulated tax losses in 2020 and 2021. By now, we have more than enough tax losses to offset any 'so-called forecasted profits'."

MATTA welcomed the recent statement by the former Minister of Finance YB Lim Guan Eng, who reminded the government not to set the tourism industry aside. Lim urged the government to provide further subsidies to workers in the tourism industry, waive the interest for bank loans during the moratorium, provide grants and subsidies on rentals and utilities to businesses that had survived last year's RM 100 billion in losses.

"We have the potential to recover swiftly to bolster the national economy, but does the Finance Minister have the same confidence? We urge the Minister of Finance to announce direct and accessible financial support in the National Budget 2022 next month," concluded Tan.

Association of Tour and Travel Agents.

MATTA's president Datuk Tan Kok Liang made the plea to the Minister of Finance, Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Tengku Abdul Azizto, calling on him to be upfront in efforts to help tourism businesses.

"The Malaysian tourism industry is on the brink of total collapse, and the Ministry of Finance needs to be specific in its allocation to not only preserve tourism business and workers but to prepare and empower the industry for a major comeback," the MATTA president explained in a statement released Wednesday.

are in bad shape due to regulatory constraints imposed by the government while other countries are recovering at a faster rate in their battle against Covid-19, MATTA's president stated.

"As borders have remained closed for the last 18 months and with just a small travel bubble for Langkawi, we plead with the Minister of Finance Tengku Zafrul to provide targeted assistance for tourism businesses and workers directly affected. This includes providing an extension of the wage subsidy and automatic bank loan moratorium and waiver of interest at least until the end of this year for



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