

**NINTH MEETING OF ASEAN-INDIA TOURISM MINISTERS  
19 January 2022**

**JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT**

1. The Ninth Meeting of ASEAN and India Tourism Ministers was held on 19 January 2022 through video conferencing. The Meeting was co-chaired by the Kingdom of Cambodia and the Republic of India.
2. The Meeting welcomed the designation of 2022 as the “ASEAN-India Friendship Year” to commemorate the 30th anniversary of ASEAN-India relations and looked forward to the development of relevant programmes and activities to celebrate this milestone.
3. Despite the challenges brought by the pandemic, the Meeting was pleased to note that prior to the pandemic, the Southeast Asia region continued to be a major source market for inbound tourism into India. India received 33,864 visitors from the ASEAN member countries in 2021 which is almost 2.40 per cent of the total tourist arrivals. Approximately 1.34 millions Indians travelled to ASEAN countries in the year 2021.
4. The Meeting recognised that with the vaccination programmes picking up pace globally, there is a sense of optimism that international travel will gradually return. In this regard, the Meeting noted that the post COVID-19 Recovery Plan for ASEAN Tourism has detailed a harmonised approach to safely reopen the industry. This will be through identifying priority areas for tourism recovery while ensuring alignment between the Recovery Plan and ASEAN-India Tourism Work Plan 2021-2022.
5. Although progress had been constrained due to the pandemic, the Meeting was pleased to note the relevant updates pertaining to the implementation of the ASEAN-India Tourism Work Plan 2021-2022, in the following key areas that were discussed at the ASEAN-India Tourism Working Group Meetings in 2021:
  - (i) Sharing of best practices for the development of responsible and/or sustainable tourism;
  - (ii) Sharing resources and facilities to provide mutual assistance in tourism education and training for quality tourism development;
  - (iii) Crisis communications to protect the reputation and credibility of the relevant tourism organisations and/or tourist destinations, particularly through the establishment of the ASEAN-India Crisis Communications Team;
  - (iv) Exchange information pertaining to statistics and development strategies, investment opportunities and economic data;
  - (v) Develop Quality Tourism and Standard to encourage the enhancement and/or development of tourism standards in ASEAN and India with a post COVID-19 outlook; and
  - (vi) Activity under the ASEAN Promotional Chapter for Tourism (APCT) India.
6. The Meeting reaffirmed its commitment to intensify collaborative efforts among public, private, cross-national and regional partnerships to reopen tourism safely in ASEAN and India.

7. The Meeting further acknowledged that tourism investments are key to advancing prosperity, development and alleviating poverty. In view of this, the Meeting also underscored the need to deepen and broaden mutually-beneficial and robust partnerships in light of not only accelerating tourism recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, but also making such partnerships stronger to support a more resilient tourism sector. The Meeting looked forward to enhancing cooperation in exchanging knowledge and capacity building to enhance a clean and green community in ASEAN and India, so as to protect the environment and move towards sustainable tourism.

8. The Meeting also recognised the importance of digital technologies in bridging the community amid social restrictions and community quarantine measures. The Meeting acknowledged that the pandemic has accelerated the process of digitalisation, with the adoption of digital solutions no longer optional but necessary. In this regard, the Meeting underscored the importance to explore ways to better utilise digital technology, reduce the digital divide by facilitating access to information and communication technologies, as well as develop skills to thrive in the digital economy in ASEAN and India.

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