

MAURITIUS: DECREASING TOURIST ARRIVALS BUT VISITORS STAY LONGER



While it is difficult to compare 2020 with 2021 because of the closed borders, the latest statistics of Mauritius for 2021 show a decline in tourist arrivals, from 442,749 in 2020 to 246,260 in 2021, a decline of 44.4%.

However, it is interesting to compare these tourist arrival figures to those of other islands in the region. In 2021, the Maldives welcomed 1,321,952 tourists; Sri Lanka, 194,495; and the Seychelles, 182,849.

The figures for Maldives and Seychelles are growing for the period 2020 to 2021, with an increase of 133.8% for the Maldives and 59.2% for Seychelles.

In Mauritius, almost all source markets showed a decline over the year, such as France with 27,985 fewer tourists coming to Mauritius in 2021 than in 2020, mainly due to the restrictions.

However, the industry stakeholders recorded the arrival of 11,507 more travelers from the United Kingdom and 2,507 more from Belgium.

For the three-month period of the opening of the borders, from October to December 2021, Mauritius welcomed a total of 187,029 tourists.

On the other hand, it is interesting to note that the number of nights per tourist has increased from an average of 12.6 nights to 14.7 nights, which should imply better tourism revenues, given the circumstances.

Currently, the authorities try to boost the tourism numbers by offering the so-called premium visa to remote workers. It allows people to work remotely from the country for as long as a year. Digital nomads have been a group of travelers that many destinations try to attract.

"We are looking for digital nomads, who can plug in and start working from anywhere in the world," said Nilen Vencadasmy, chairman of the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority.

The pandemic slashed the tourist arrivals from about 1.4 million a year to practically zero as the island closed its borders. Hospitality staff lost their jobs and the collapse took an almost 63 billion Mauritian rupee (\$1.45 billion) out of the nation's annual gross domestic product.

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