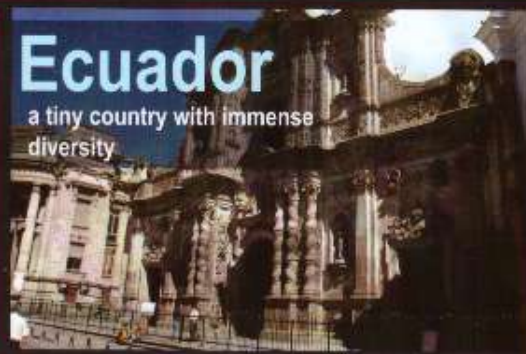


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Ecuador

a tiny country with immense diversity



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ECUADOR: A TINY COUNTRY WITH IMMENSE DIVERSITY

A small country in South America, Ecuador is a land of immense diversity, and tourism is the third largest source of income for the country. In an exclusive interview with TnH, H.E. DR. PATRICIO GARCÉS RAMÍREZ, Ambassador of Ecuador to India, said that the tourism potential of the Indian market is yet to be exploited by Ecuador. "Now we are interested in promoting Ecuador among different segments of the Indian population, especially our adventure destinations as well as the honeymoon destinations. Excerpts:

By PREM KUMAR

Q How important is tourism for your economy?

Tourism is the third largest source of income for Ecuador. The country's total income from tourism was more than USD 1.5 million in 2015. The production of banana is the largest source of

income in the country, followed by shrimp.

Q How many tourists does your country receive annually? Which are key source markets?

1, 617,914 tourists arrived in Ecuador in 2017, representing a growth of 14% compared to 2016. The countries of the origin are mainly the US, the European Union, Japan, and the neighbouring countries of South America. Between January and September 2017, USD 1,204.5 million entered Ecuador in the form of spending by the visiting foreign tourists.

In the third quarter of 2017, the number of jobs in accommodation and food services was 498,385, which represents 6.4% of the total number of employees in the economy, placing these activities among the six economic industries that make the greatest contribution to the national employment.

Q What about connectivity between India and Ecuador?

The most flights from India to Ecuador are through Amsterdam and Madrid since both cities have several direct flights to Quito, the capital of Ecuador.



H.E. DR. PATRICIO GARCÉS RAMÍREZ
Ambassador of Ecuador to India



Q What is the visa process for Indians?

Indian citizens do not require visa to travel to Ecuador for a stay up to 90 days. The citizens of India can obtain the on-arrival permission of subcategory T-3 at all the International Airports of the Republic of Ecuador. It is free of cost. To avail this facility, travellers must have following requirements to show at the Indian and Ecuadorian airports and to airlines officials: 1.) Original passport, which must be valid for at least six months from the date of departure, 2.) Yellow fever vaccination card is mandatory while travelling to Ecuador, and 3.) Travel health insurance.

Q How many Indians visited Ecuador last year? What are the reasons for Indians to visit your country?

The number of visitors from India has been very low, with a high fluctuation in recent years. Many visits are linked to commercial activities, which involve the export of Indian products.

Q How active has Ecuador Tourism been in the Indian market?

The tourism potential of the Indian market has not been exploited by Ecuador, despite the fact that there is a significant flow of travellers to Peru, a country with which we share a border. Surely it's because some Bollywood movies were filmed there.

Now we are interested in promoting Ecuador among different segments of the Indian population, especially our adventure destinations as well as the honeymoon

"Presence of the huge diversity in a tiny country like Ecuador is one of the best selling points for our tourism."

destinations. Presence of the huge diversity in a tiny country like Ecuador is one of the best selling points for our tourism. In size, Ecuador is only about 60 per cent of Japan. The country consists of four distinct regions: Andes, Amazon, Galapagos Islands and Pacific Coast.

Q How do you see current environment from tourism perspective?

The political and economic situation of Ecuador is quite stable, in addition to the fact that the whole of Latin America presents condi-

tions of stability that favour the development of tourist activities.

Q What are the current global factors affecting the cross-border movement of tourists?

In Ecuador, we believe in human mobility as a right of humans, and that is the reason you do not need a visa to enter Ecuador as tourists. There are no restrictions or limitations for the entry of Indian citizens into Ecuador, up to a period of 90 days stay.

During the last three years, the number of tourists that travelled to Ecuador has significantly increased, however, the destinations of origin are the same, and we strongly believe that this number of tourists can be increased by attracting increasing number of Indian travellers. Every year more and more travellers are interested in exploring other experiences and new destinations, which fits well with the tourist offering of Ecuador.