

# TOURIST DESTINATIONS IN INDONESIA - NOT ONLY BALI!



Minister of the Indonesian Tourism Creative Economy Mari Elka Pangestu said that a shift in the perceptions of people from all over the globe regarding Indonesia must be changed. The said perceptions are mainly due to terrorism and tsunamis as repeatedly reported in international news. The news zeroed in on Bali which is the main tourism point of the country as Jakarta globe reported

Friday.

Mrs. Pangestu said that pushing more positive news about Indonesia will surely promote tourism. The poor global perception regarding Indonesia is on top of its lack of infrastructure is what is hindering tourists from foreign countries to consider the country as a great vacation sport. She even noted that when you search for Indonesia in Google, you will see its flag, the Garuda and the Borobudur Temple. Comparisons on this point of view was made with Cambodia which when searched on Google has many images that will drive foreign tourism towards it such as the renowned Hindu temple complex.

The ministry aims to gain 10 million tourists by 2014 but all the stated facts just seems to make it impossible. Minister Pangestu has an annual goal of at least 1 million foreign tourists each year. 2011's numbers showed 7.6 million and hopefully 2012 will reach 8 million. By the time the calendar hits 2014, Mrs. Pangestu is hoping for 10 million which is "still half of Malaysia's foreign tourists."

Furthermore, the minister wants to make sure that people visiting are quality tourists. Indonesia wants tourists to stay longer and spend more time in the country if possible. The tourism sector created an income of 8.6 billion US dollars last year which is 13 percent increase from the previous year. Pangestu then hopes that it reaches 9.5 billion this year and 11 billion US dollars by 2014. The minister added that the tourism sector, the domestic sector in specific, is growing as proven by the 125 million tourists that generated 15 trillion Rupiah or around 1.6 billion US dollar for 2011.

The minister is solid on her decision on promoting tourism. She stresses on the fact that Indonesia is so much more than Bali. In fact, there are 80 more destinations in Indonesia that they are sure foreign tourists will enjoy. Among them is Lake Toba in North Sumatra, Bunaken Island and Komodo islands.

The branding "Wonderful Indonesia" does not seem to help again, because of the lack in infrastructure and connectivity. In addition to that, direct flights to possibly great tourism destinations are still lacking. What makes matters worse is the fact that the airports and seaports were overcapacity.

The help of the Public Works Ministry is highly needed along with the State Enterprises Ministry and the Transportation Ministry. With these three departments hand in hand, improvements can be done.

The ministry has divided the tourism destinations into seven categories: Sports tourism (diving, golf); eco tourism; cruise ship tourism; spa and medical tourism; culture and heritage tourism; culinary and shopping tourism; and MICE (meeting, incentives, conferences and events) tourism.

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