

PATA: PACIFIC ASIA RECORDED 6% LESS TOURISTS



PATA released latest statistics showing general decline of tourism in the Asian Pacific Region. However, Indonesia, Malaysia, Korea or Taiwan recorded good tourist numbers.

Asia Pacific as many other parts of our planet recorded a decline in tourism arrivals. **According to the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA), the number of international visitors to the 41 destinations in the Pacific Asia region dropped by 6 per cent** in the first half of this year when compared to the numbers from 2008. Association of Asia Pacific Airlines even reported an 11.5 per cent drop in the number of people transported.

The reasons for the decline are obvious. It is the global economic crisis and the flu epidemics. However, these are not the only reasons for the declining tourism within the region. Among other negative factors that influence the Asia Pacific tourism industry are the weakening currencies in some of the states in the region and also the **political instability of Thailand, which is one of the region's most popular tourism destinations.**

Overall the region witnessed a decline in tourism arrivals. According to PATA's data, tourism dropped by 10 percent in May because of the flu outbreak. Strong decline was recorded e.g. in Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

The Vietnamese try to fight off the decline by various stimulus measures to the industry. They use the usual tools - extensive promotion campaigns to lure tourists back to the country. The latest campaign is called "Impressive Vietnam" and it is meant to lure foreigners as well as to promote domestic tourism. The Vietnam General Department of Tourism proposes various other measures that should help the industry. They e.g. proposed reduction of VAT for tourism related businesses. They also suggested exempting visa fees for foreign tourists. It is quite obvious that the country will be unable to fulfill its plan to lure 4.5 million foreign tourists this year.

Nevertheless, not everyone in the Asia Pacific region is in decline. Indonesian, Malaysian and Korean tourism industries actually continued to grow. Another successful tourism destination - Taiwan - benefited vastly from the eased travel conditions for travelers coming from China and Korea.

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