

INDONESIAN TOURISM RISES FROM ASHES



According to the Culture and Tourism Minister Jero Wacik, Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) had predicted that about 7.5 million foreign tourists would visit Indonesia in 2007. This rise is even bigger than that planned by the government. The official plans were divided into 5 possible scenarios. The scenarios went from an pessimistic expectation of 5,21 million foreign tourist arrivals to the most optimistic prediction of 7.016 million arrivals that should earn some and US\$5.82 billion. The minister believes that the growth of this numbers will continue adding one million visitors every year. "Thus, we hope that at the end of 2008 about seven million foreign tourists are expected to arrive in Indonesia and about 10 million at the end of 2011," Jero Wacik added.

These are some positive news for the Indonesian tourism industry as it had serious problems in past. There have been terrorist attacks, earthquakes, tsunamis, transport accidents, outbreaks of bird flu as well as the danger of SARS (Severe and Acute Respiratory Syndrome). All those negative events had a devastating effect on the industry. The problem of the Indonesian nowadays is that it is somewhat unknown to the world. People consider Indonesia an exotic destination. This is supported by the promotional campaigns that depict the country as a destination where you can admire beautiful beaches, scenic mountains, colorful religious ceremonies (in Bali's case), good-looking men and women in attractive traditional costumes. Exotic destinations attract people but the country itself remains unknown. The result of this is that if there is any rumor about possible danger in Indonesia the tourism drops. Some people nowadays consider Indonesia a hotbed for terrorists. After 2002, Bali bombing in which 202 foreigners, mostly Australians, died, Australia started to warn tourist about the danger in Indonesia. On the other hand, no one warns people that they should not travel to the UK even though the country was also attacked by terrorists. It is because the UK is a known destination; it is not considered an exotic ergo unknown destination.

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