

# THAI TOURISM STILL IN TROUBLE



Tourism industry is a major source of income for Thailand. In 2007 it contributed approximately 6.7 per cent to country's GDP. Nevertheless, the country is currently politically unstable, which is definitely bad for the industry since it surely puts some tourists off.

The whole world could have seen what was happening in this Asian country. The demonstrations and clashes with the police resulted in two deaths and 400 injuries. The government house was under siege and the opposition called for the PM to step down. The military has gotten involved on some level.

Tourism Authority of Thailand, however, tried hard to convince the tourists that the problems are limited to small areas of Bangkok and that it was still safe to travel to the kingdom. The hospitality industry was damaged anyway. There is the example of the Chaophya Park Hotel, a four hundred room 4 star deluxe hotel in Bangkok. Everything was going well until September 2008. The unrests accompanied with the global economic downturn caused the occupancy rates of this particularly hotel to drop to 56 per cent this September whereas it was 73 per cent in September 2007.

The Tourism Authority of Thailand is well aware of the importance of the tourism sector for the country's economy. That is why they try hard to promote Thai tourism also among the local people. Their plan is to reach 5 per cent growth in domestic tourism. According to the Deputy Governor for Marketing Communications of Tourism Authority of Thailand, the new campaign should help to lower the impact from the worldwide economic crisis and convince Thai people to travel domestically. The campaign is designed to reach as broad market as possible. That is the reason why it presents hundreds of tourism activities ranging from visiting festivals to playing golf.

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