

ANALYSTS: MYANMAR'S EXPANDING TOURISM IS "SCARY"



Times are good for Myanmar this year. Not only is the country undergoing a lot of political reforms, its tourism industry was able to bring a million foreign visitors last year, the highest in the country's history. Moreover, projections for 2013 also indicate that

Myanmar can expect a 30% growth in its tourism industry, despite increasing hotel costs and a shortage of skilled staff workers.

Interestingly, Myanmar's steady rise in the global tourism market is described as "scary" by analysts. The developing South East Asian nation's recent importance in the global tourism market is not an unexpected phenomenon, but **many inbound tour operators are concerned that the country's existing infrastructure will not be able to handle the increasing demand from tourists.**

According to the government statistics, most of Myanmar's tourists arrive through Yangon airport, which is the ideal destination for international airlines in the country. Other popular destinations include Bagan, Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay. In 2012, Yangon was estimated to have received around 550,000 visitors, an increase of more than 50% from 2011. Thailand, Japan, China and other Asian nations made up the bulk of the foreign visitors at 340,000. The rest came from the European Union (135,000) and the United States (36,500),

This year, Myanmar's tourism industry is expected to increase by 30%, which most analysts hope will mirror the increase in 2012. Although Asian countries will continue to supply the vast majority of tourists entering Myanmar, strong economic growth will likely draw more Western tourists and investor's into the country.

Even though 2013 will be a challenging year for many inbound tour operators in Myanmar, they are confident that new infrastructure will be built to serve future demands and challenges.

Inbound tour operators describe Myanmar's tourism as "scary" mainly because of the extremely high hotel rates in 2012, coupled with insufficient infrastructure and services.

Date: 2013-02-04

Article link:

<http://www.tourism-review.com/myanmar-tourism-industry-booming-at-scary-rate-news3568>