

INDONESIA TO ACHIEVE 10 MILLION TOURIST ARRIVALS DESPITE VOLCANIC ASH



Indonesia is currently on track of achieving the 10 million tourists mark for the year 2015. This comes despite a temporary setback that occurred when airports across Java and Bali were closed down due to volcanic ash.

The latest data shows that at least 850,000 tourists entered the country in August. According to the Indonesian Central Statistics Agency, **this is an improvement of 2.87 percent compared to last year's figure, and an increase of 4.46% compared to the month of July.** This gives a total of 6.32 million, the number of foreign tourists who have entered the country from the beginning of the year up to the month of August.

At least 3.68 million tourists are needed by the end of the year to hit the target. Indonesian Tourism Ministry is however confident that it can reach the mark. The ministry is predicting an increase in the number of arrivals in the last quarter of the year as is the norm with past years. It has said that it expects arrivals of at least 850,000 in September, 1 million arrivals each in the months of October and November, and 1.1 million arrivals in December. If these targets are achieved, the ministry will reach its target of 10 million foreign tourists in the year 2015.

The 10 million foreign arrivals is part of the country's vision to see the number of tourists visiting the country increase to 20 million annually by 2019. The ministry plans to increase its target to 12 million tourists in 2016, and gradually raise the target until they hit the 20 million mark in 2019.

To achieve this goal, Indonesian government has waived visa for several countries across the world. The Tourism Ministry has also increased its campaign to promote the country's tourism in overseas markets.

The efforts have proven to be successful, with the recorded monthly arrivals this year being higher than those of last year. According to the Central Statistics Agency, the Tourism Market will achieve its target if the trend continues in the remaining four months of the year.

From the data available at the Central Statistics Agency, **Singapore has produced the most arrivals, accounting for 15.13% of all tourists.** China is following closely at 14.95%, with Malaysia, Australia and Japan recording 11.18%, 8.35% and 5.75% respectively.

Bali was the most favored point of entry into the country. However, the number of arrivals dropped by 11.29% compared to last year, and a significant drop in the month on month arrivals was also experienced. The decline was due to the volcanic eruption of Mt Raugn in East Java, which dispensed volcanic ash into the sky. Ngurah Rai International Airport, which serves Bali, was closed down as a result, affecting hundreds of flights that were scheduled to enter through there.

The volcanic ash also led to the closure of international airports that serve Surabaya, as well as other airports in the region that are used for domestic flights. The eruption also affected the number of tourists entering the country, with the Tourism Ministry blaming the drop in the number of

Australian arrivals on the disaster. According to the ministry, approximately 80% of Australian tourists enter Indonesia to visit Bali. This therefore explains why there was a drop in their number from 11.54% in July to 8.35%.

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