

SINGAPORE SETS GREAT CHALLENGES



The tourism industry is doing very well in Singapore. Local hotels are performing better than ever. Mr. Lim Neo Chian, Chief Executive and Deputy Chairman of the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) said: "The first half of 2007 showed a continuation of the good momentum we have been seeing in recent years. The tourism sector has done even better than it did in the same period last year. Compared to the same period in 2006, the first half of 2007 showed a strong 9.0% growth in tourism receipts and a 5.2% increase in visitor arrivals. We have also seen record high visitor arrivals for each month this year compared to the same month in previous years."

The hotel room rates rise and average occupancy rates are round 86%. "The main reason for the rise in rates is incremental demand. The primary contribution to the boost in demand is the increase in the number of corporate travelers attending meetings, conferences and exhibitions," said Mr Mohamed Yusof, the director of yield management and business development at the Royal Plaza on Scotts. The number of visitors is also growing. In June 848,000 travelers visited the country. It is a growth of 7.5 per cent over June 2006. There were many visitors from the top three markets: Indonesia (180,000), India (81,000) and China (77,000). Singapore is also attracting more British tourists. UK visitors to Singapore in the year 2006 totaled 488,000. Divya Panickar, STB area director for Northern and Western Europe, said: "The sustained year on year growth in UK visitors to Singapore shows that it continues to be a destination which is high on UK traveler's must visit list as well as successfully attracting repeat visitors who feel they have a lot more to discover and experience." The STB's aim is 10.2 million visitor arrivals and \$13.6 billion in receipts by the year's end.

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