

TOURIST ARRIVALS TO THAILAND BREAK THROUGH THE 12 MILLION MARK



According to government figures, Thailand's tourist arrivals surpassed 12 million at the end of last month. It is on track to reach 25 million by the end of the year.

From the beginning of the year to June 25, 12.46 million tourist arrivals were recorded, up 539 percent from last year, deputy government spokeswoman Traisuree Taisaranakul said.

The top five source markets with the most visitors to the Kingdom this year are Malaysia (1.9 million), followed by China (1.3 million), Russia (784,428), South Korea (741,909), and India (732,523).

Tourist arrivals have significantly increased alongside airport usage, as reported by Airports of Thailand (AoT) since the start of the current fiscal year in October. The top six airports, Suvarnabhumi, Don Mueang, Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Phuket, and Hat Yai, welcomed 34.3 million passengers from October to May. This is a remarkable increase of 635 percent over the previous year. The six airports have also handled 202,700 international and domestic flights, reflecting a 175 percent increase from last year.

Tourist arrivals are a crucial driver of the country's economic growth. Tourism revival will help offset the faltering export sector.

For the last quarter of this year, the AoT expects foreign tourist arrivals to exceed 2 million per month as airlines add more flights to their winter schedules.

The government has set a target of welcoming 25 million tourists to the Kingdom this year and hopes to generate 1.5 trillion baht in revenue.

The TAT is confident that they can meet their target, as they expect the number of tourists from China to increase to five million this year.

The TAT and the MOF will launch the "Visa Pre-screening System" (VPSS) later this month. It is designed to speed up the visa application process for foreign tourists.

The Tourism and Sports Minister, Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn, announced that the tourist tax for foreign visitors, which was supposed to start on June 1, has been postponed until January next year. The new government will evaluate the current tax system for tourists further. There is a fee of 300 baht per person for those arriving by air and 150 baht per person for those arriving by land or boat.

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