

Key Developments 2011

- The auspicious 7th cycle 84th birthday of HM King Rama IX the Great, the 80th birthday of HM the Queen and 60th birthday of HRH Crown Prince Maha Vachiralongkorn.
- Post-monsoon floods for several months starting 25 July.
- World Sports Tourism Conference, World Sports Destination Expo (WSDE), International Sports Tourism Conference held Sept 29 - October 2
- Royal Flora Ratchaphruek opens in Chiang Mai, 9 November.
- Third Thai-Lao Friendship Bridge opens November 11.

### CONTENTS

### 2011

- ASEAN Infrastructure Connectivity Forges Ahead
- Life After Yet Another Political Crisis
- Message to Indian Visitors: Meet "Amitabh Bachchan" At Madame Tussauds Bangkok
- Floods: Picking Up the Pieces After Yet Another Crisis

### EXECUTIVE EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

IMTIAZ MUQBIL



https://www.travel-impact-newswire.com/ | imtiaz@travel-impact-newswire.com

RESEARCHERS
AND ASSISTANT EDITORS:

ANISA SONGPREECHA, LUCKKANA WILAIKAEW DESIGN & LAYOUT: NUSREEN EKACHON

## ASEAN INFRASTRUCTURE CONNECTIVITY FORGES AHEAD



Mr. Suraphon Svetasreni *Governor* 

### THAILAND MEDIA BRIEFING 20 JANUARY 2011 ASEAN TOURISM FORUM, CAMBODIA

Greetings to all journalists covering the ASEAN Tourism Forum in Cambodia. Thank you all for being with us today. It is always a pleasure to see such a large turnout of friends and supporters at our media conferences. This year, I am happy to report that we have some very newsworthy stories to tell. We are extremely proud that Thailand has pulled off a remarkable recovery in our travel industry last year, and today I will be try and shed some light on the strategies that helped bring this about.

Firstly, I would like to extend my warm thanks and gratitude to the people, government and travel industry of Cambodia for their warm hospitality and excellent arrangements. We are very proud and happy to see Cambodia hosting its second ATF. This is proof of the success of our tourism promotion efforts under the umbrella of the Greater Mekong Subregion.

Distinguished members of the media,

Firstly, let me talk about Thailand Tourism Overview and ASEAN Markets Situation.

International visitor arrivals to Thailand totalled 15.84 million in 2010, a good growth of 11.96% over 14.14 million in 2009. As you are aware, Thailand was hit by serious political turmoil months of April-May 2010,

which seriously affected visitor arrivals. However, thanks to the policy support of the Royal Thai Government, the hard work of all the government agencies, THAI Airways and all the airlines serving Thailand, the private sector and all our supporters and partners abroad, we were able to make a remarkable recovery and end our 50th anniversary year on a positive note.

For 2011, if there are no further global or other crises, the TAT is targeting 16.4-16.7 million international visitor arrivals with projected revenue earnings of 625 – 655 billion baht (US\$ 20.78 billion – 21.78 billion) in tourism revenue.

Visitor arrivals from the ASEAN countries totalled 4.41 million, up 11.27% over 2009. Malaysia topped the list with 1.96 million arrivals (+11.65%), followed by Laos 689,000 (+5.29%) and Singapore 579,000 (+2.76%). We are naturally very pleased to see this strong growth in intraregional travel, which has always been a major policy platform of the ASEAN countries.

We are still tabulating the profile of the arrivals for 2010 but the stats for 2009 will provide some interesting snapshots. For example:

The vast majority of ASEAN visitors (81%, or 3.3 million) are repeat visitors. In 2009, the number of repeat visitors was up 2.9%.

On aviation front, total aviation capacity from ASEAN countries to Thailand in 2010 totalled 38,114 flights and 7,166,502 seats. Singapore led the list with a total of 10,770 flights and 2.26 million seats, followed by Malaysia with 9,036 flights and 1.63 million seats and Vietnam 4,257 flights and 967,184 seats. In future, we are anticipating further growth from Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam.

As a result of liberalisation of the Thai and ASEAN aviation industry, a number of secondary and low-cost airlines are now operating. This has led to a dramatic increase in seat capacity and reduction in air-fares. Here are just some of the new routes which have emerged.



66

Our policy and philosophy will be to stress "Balanced Strategies" that take into the three key dimensions of tourism - the economy, environment, and society - to ensure long-term, sustainable tourism development.

55

- Air Asia: Surabaya-Bangkok, 4 flights/week, (start 14 Nov 2010), Jakarta Phuket, 8 flights/week, (start 16 Nov 2010)
- Air Bagan: Yangon Chiang Mai, 2 flights/week
- Silk Air: Singapore Chiang Mai, 4 flights/week

In order to tab the Indonesia market, the TAT recently opened a tourism office in Jakarta. This adds to our existing offices in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur. The TAT believes Indonesian travellers are now ready to visit Thailand big time. In 2010, arrivals from Indonesia numbered 281,873, up by 24%. This was due to the Indonesian government waiving the fiscal tax for outgoing Indonesian travellers and the opening of new routes by low cost airlines. The average length of stay was five days with spending of 4,300 baht per person per day in 2009. The TAT projects Indonesian arrivals will grow by 35% both next year and in 2012.

Distinguished media delegates,

With our tourism industry having emerged from 2010 in reasonably good shape, we are well-placed to start focusing on the future. Our policy and philosophy will be to stress "Balanced Strategies" that take into the three key dimensions of tourism – the economy, environment, and society – to ensure long-term, sustainable tourism development. Hence, we have developed a 2011 strategy that covers the following five elements: Society, Economy, Environment, Sufficiency and Sustainability. Under this umbrella framework, we have pinpointed five specific strategies, as follows:

### Balance 1 – Linking Monetary Value and Emotional Value

Our previous "Amazing Thailand, Amazing Value" campaign focused on Thailand's high value-for-money factor. While monetary value remains a key selling point, TAT will balance it by strengthening Thailand's brand association with emotional value under the concept of "Win Their Hearts, Win Their Minds." This is why we changed the branding tagline to "Amazing Thailand Always Amazes You".



### Balance 2 – Domestic Tourism, Regional and International Tourism

The next strategy is balancing our market structure to equally stress international, regional and domestic travel. Regional travel specifically refers to intra-ASEAN travel, which is now already growing strongly. Given that TAT is already highly focused on international tourism, we will encourage greater domestic tourism as a part of life for Thais and Thailand residents. This will help to reduce Thai tourism's dependence on international.



When needed, TAT uses short-term market recovery initiatives to respond to unforeseen events. Like we did immediately after the political unrest in Thailand, we use a 'Quick Win' strategy with campaigns of targeted special offers to bring back tourists quickly. For long-term market expansion, adding emotional value to our quality tourism products will help sustain growth. Visitors who have warm memories of Thailand tend to return, and also tell others about their great experiences.

#### Balance 4 - Peak Season and Low Season

The winter is traditionally Thailand's peak travel season, when travellers from northern climates seek a break from the cold weather and Australians have their major school term break. However, TAT aims to balance the low season with the high season by promoting "Green Tourism" to position Thailand as a year-round destination. This will help us attract visitors from high potential markets like the Middle East and India.







### Balance 5 – Gaining Economic Revenue and Preserving Ecological Assets

The first 50 years of Thai tourism development focused largely on maximizing economic returns for Thailand. The next 50 years will require a focus on minimizing the ecological impact of tourism. TAT is promoting sustainable tourism marketing; such as, Community-Based Tourism (CBT) and Sustainable Tourism Routes. We recently signed an MOU with the key stakeholders in major tourist destinations around Thailand to create sustainable tourism awareness.



Our market research shows us that "Amazing Thailand" remains a powerful and effective theme. Hence, we will complement it with the tagline "Always Amazes You" for our 2011 marketing campaign.

**JJ** 

Distinguished media delegates,

Our market research shows us that "Amazing Thailand" remains a powerful and effective theme. Hence, we will complement it with the tagline "Always Amazes You" for our 2011 marketing campaign. This will position the Kingdom as a truly exceptional destination. It reinforces the positive emotions visitors enjoy due to the unique charm of "Thai-ness," which includes the hospitality and friendliness of the Thai people and Thailand's unique art and culture which will differentiate our Kingdom from other holiday destinations.

For ASEAN market, we would like to present Thailand as a destination for relaxing, exploration (Sabai Thailand). Today, I would like to present you 3 Sabai such as **Sabai Pocket, Sabai Heart and Sabai Access**.

Firstly, I need to explain that the Thai word "Sabai" is usually translated as "happy", but its use is often closer to "comfortable", "relaxed", or "well". Thai offers many ways to intensify an adjective - one way is simply to repeat it. Thus "sabai sabai" can be translated into "everything's chill"... it is almost beyond words, the Thai's heaven on earth.

One of the most promising areas is the development of the short-break, long-weekend holiday market. This is becoming very important in line with changes in global business practices. All around the region, including ASEAN and India,



Firstly, Sabai Pocket; Thailand remains the best value for money destination for the ASEAN visitors. I think many of you are aware that people love coming to Thailand because it is one of the best places to eat, shop, stay. Many of our ASEAN visitors make a beeline for the Mahboonkrong shopping centre in Bangkok. There is probably no better place in the world to get a good foot massage after walking around with shopping bags all day. The huge number of accommodation options means ASEAN visitors can stay at the budget properties or the more exclusive boutique properties. For those wishing to stay a bit longer, a number of residential apartments have opened all over the country. Of course, our Thai food is legendary. For our Muslim visitors from Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei, halal food restaurants are becoming very commonplace in Bangkok and upcountry.

**Secondly, Sabai Heart;** Thailand is and continues to be a wonderful diverse tourism destination with great beaches, food, spas, hotels, nature and sports. An excellent reputation for product delivery including an extensive range of natural and cultural heritage attractions form a wide variety of tourism destinations and activities.

For visitors always looking for new places to go to in Thailand, we would suggest the beaches of what we are now calling the Royal Coast and Northeast Thailand, known in Thai as simply I-san.

**Royal Coast:** The beaches of the West coast of the Gulf of Thailand, Cha-am, Hua Hin, Chumphon and Ranong are now known as the 'Royal Coast'. With first-class highways from Bangkok these coastal areas are very accessible, with exciting beach resorts and fabulous national parks. Although these are not 'new destinations', we are focussing on this cluster as part of a strategy to distribute tourists to other parts of Thailand, thus providing a more equitable distribution of income while reducing congestion pressure at the more popular destinations, such as Pattaya.

In addition, some destinations that tourist can try in the future such as Koh Chang, the largest and busiest island in Trat and the second largest island in the country after Phuket. Koh Kood is located at the very end of the Thai eastern maritime territory bordering Cambodia. Koh Kood is the last Island in the Trat Sea Waters. Covering 105 square kilometers, it is the second biggest island of the province of Trat, after Koh Chang.

**I-san Attractions:** The Northeast Thailand region is geographically and culturally the closest to Cambodia and Laos, and shares a common border. In the not too distant future, the Asian

In addition to all the superb natural and cultural attractions, including the UNESCO World Heritage site of Ban Chiang and a Dinosaur Museum, Northeast Thailand is seeing the emergence of some wonderful new boutique hotels.

**5**5

Highway, a vast network of roads and bridges, will further link Thailand with its neighbouring countries of the Greater Mekong Subregion, boosting the accessibility of the entire region.

In addition to all the superb natural and cultural attractions, including the UNESCO World Heritage site of Ban Chiang and a Dinosaur Museum, Northeast Thailand is seeing the emergence of some wonderful new boutique hotels that are perfect for small, exclusive groups of travellers seeking to better explore this region, while staying in comfortable surroundings.

New flight connections are also being established. For example, Thai AirAsia late last year inaugurated two entirely new routes linking Phuket to both Udon Thani and Ubon Ratchathani. Domestic airline Nok Air also provides daily flight connections to both Udon Thani and Ubon Ratchathani as well as the provinces of Buriram, Nakhon Phanom and Sakhon Nakhon.

### Quickly find the information you need amazing to make your holiday go smoothly with the new "Amazing Thailand" THAILAND application, it delivers facts, travel tips and destination details right to your phone. Amazing suggested TRIP PLANNER trips in Thailand Explore Thailand in VR 360 360 degrees SPEAK THAI No language barrier . . . . . Available on

AMAZING THAILAND APPLICATION

Thirdly, Sabai Access: Due to the increasing role of communications technology and social media in both the information and booking process, we are raising our digital profile with the launch of the "Amazing Thailand" mobile application to run on iPhone, Blackberry and Android, as well as popular devices such as iPad and iPod Touch. At present, "Amazing Thailand" has more than 120,000 fans on its Facebook fan page, and TAT is currently ranked one of the top three tourism promotion organizations in the world. TAT is also extending its digital reach through Twitter @ThailandFanClub for foreign tourists and @Go2Thailand for Thai travellers. We are targeting more than 300 million potential target users worldwide.

This new marketing tool makes the most of the information on the TAT website, expands Thailand's tourist databases, increases the number of fans and followers in social media, and will support new

marketing campaigns in the future.

Distinguished media delegates,

As you know Thailand has a long-standing geographical advantage that has positioned Thailand at the crossroads of Asia, allowing for a good balance of arrivals in terms of source-markets and customer segments. This is the why Thailand's travel and tourism has been able to rise to its many challenges.



**Gateway to ASEAN:** Since its opening in 2006, Suvarnabhumi International Airport has played a major role in facilitating visitor arrivals to the country. Today, it handles just under 100 domestic and foreign airlines. As 80% of all visitor arrivals to Thailand enter through Bangkok, the airport has given a new impetus to travel & tourism throughout the region.

At the same time, the government is placing much emphasis on growing Chiang Mai as a northern aviation hub and Phuket as a southern hub. Many of the major airports in the region are undergoing significant upgrading, and attracting new airlines, especially the low-cost operators. Phuket is becoming a very important point of entry. This was very noticeable during the April-May 2010 period of political unrest. Many visitors shifted their travel plans from Bangkok to Phuket.

-Facilitation Cross Border; Thai – Cambodia (Visa Free Entry): Effective last December 16, Thailand and Cambodia introduced mutual visa exemptions at all international checkpoints to mark the 60th anniversary of our bilateral relations. Initially, the mutual visa exemption for Thais and Cambodians holding passports allows for two-week stays. We are also pushing ahead with a plan to allow daily entry at three border crossings, as against only four days a week. The border province of Sa Kaeo is gearing up is extending the opening hours at three border checkpoints, Tha Phraya, Nong Prue and Baan Khaod in all in the province's three districts from four days from 9am to 4 pm to everyday from 9am to 5 pm, starting Jan 1, 2011.

-R3A (Malaysia, Singapore to China): Thailand's location makes it the natural hub of the Greater Mekong Subregion. A number of significant roads, highways, and infrastructure improvements continue to link us more closely with our neighbouring countries of Cambodia, Lao PDR., Myanmar, Vietnam, as well as Southern China. The 1,200 kilometre R3A Highway between Thailand and Lao PDR is complete and reaches Kunming, China. This will allow visitors from Malaysia and Singapore to drive through Thailand through Laos all the way to China.

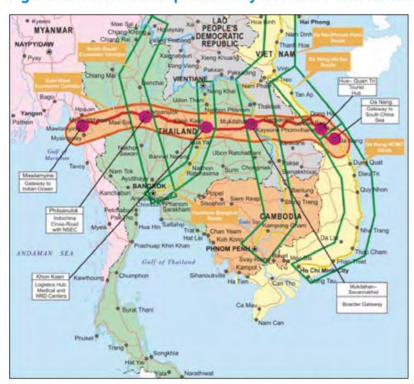


Figure 2.2: EWEC Complementary Corridors and Routes

EWEC = East–West Economic Corridor, HCMC = Ho Chi Minh City, HRD = Human Resource Development, NSEC = North–South Economic Corridor.

- -R9 (Vietnam, Laos, Thailand and Myanmar): Another key road network is known as the East-West Economic Corridor (EWEC) -- the R9, linking Vietnam, Laos, Thailand and Myanmar. The East-West Economic Corridor which ends at Vietnam's Da Nang City help integrate the region's transportation and pave the way for the ASEAN Community which will materialise in the next five years. It will also open its transportation to South China Sea and connect with countries outside the region.
- **-Thai-Lao Friendship Bridges:** We are proud that there are now two bridges over the Mekong River, and two more are coming up. All of them will play a significant role in facilitating travel to, from and within the ASEAN and Mekong regions in future.

The first Thai-Lao Friendship Bridge over the Mekong linking the Thai province of Nong Khai and Lao PDR capital of Vientiane was opened in 1994 with Australian funding. The second Thai-

Lao Friendship Bridge linking the Lao province of Savannakhet with northeastern Thailand's Mukdahan province was opened in 2006.

As both bridges are international checkpoints, they are playing a major role in promoting cross-border travel. The third bridge linking Nakhon Phanom province in Thailand with Thakhek, Khammouane in Laos is due to open in late 2012. The Fourth Bridge, linking Huai Xai district in Laos' Bokeo province to Chiang Khong in northern Thailand's Chiang Rai province, is to open in late 2013.

**-Hi-Speed Train:** The air and road linkages will be further strengthened via rail links. With help from the Chinese government, Thailand is planning to proceed with its first high-speed railway that will run all the way from South Thailand to the northern border with Laos.

I would now like to turn to the capital city of Bangkok.

One of the most important recent developments has been the opening of the Airport Rail-link which provides smooth, inexpensive and hassle free-city transport straight from the airport right to the centre of Bangkok. This has enhanced the attraction of visiting Bangkok as well as transiting through it extremely easy. In addition, it will upgrade Suvarnabhumi International Airport to be the airline hub of Asian region and enhancing the Mass Rapid Transit system in Bangkok towards perfection.

Airline passengers now may use the new check-in and baggage handling service systems at the City Air Terminal, also known as Makkasan Station, for Thai Airways International (THAI) and Bangkok Airways. More airlines are expected to set up check-in counters in the future.

Before the conclusion, let me give you some upcoming events for this year.

**Chinese New Year Celebration:** This year, to mark His Majesty the King's 84th birthday and 36th Anniversary of Thai-Chinese diplomatic relationship, TAT and related private sectors will organise a special Chinese New Year Celebration during 1 – 9 Feb 2011 in Bangkok and 9 provinces in Thailand such as Chiang Mai, Nakhon Sawan, Suphanburi, Ratchaburi, Ayutthaya, Chonburi (Pattaya), Nakhon Ratchasima, Songkhla (Hat Yai) and Phuket.

**Mega Fam trip to Songkran Festival:** Tourism Authority of Thailand will organise Mega Fam Trip during Songkran festival on 10-13 April 2011 by inviting over 500 media representatives worldwide to visit Thailand and experience the Songkran festival.

**Thailand Travel Mart 2011:** Our most important annual travel trade shows, the Thailand Travel Mart plus Amazing Gateway to the Greater Mekong Subregion (TTM+), will be held during 8-10 June, 2011, at the Exhibition Centre Hall, IMPACT, Muang Thong Thani. This is the largest Business to Business event in the Greater Mekong Subregion. First organised in 2001, it offers a particularly valuable opportunity to network with small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

### **CONCLUSION**

Distinguished media delegates

I am sure this briefing has given you plenty to write about. Each one of these developments is a story in itself and we hope you will find interesting angles to pursue. Once more, I would like to thank you for being with us today. I will be happy to take a few questions.

# LIFE AFTER YET ANOTHER POLITICAL CRISIS



Mr. Suraphon Svetasreni *Governor* 

### NETWORKING LUNCH, ITB BERLIN 11 MARCH 2011

Guten Tag and Greetings all. Thank you all for being with us today. It is always a pleasure to see such a large turnout of friends and supporters at our networking lunch in ITB.

We also have our TAT executives and directors joining you, which I think is a good opportunity for both of us to discuss and share ideas on promoting and marketing Thailand as well as further networking.

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce some senior executives who are with us today. First, Mrs. Juthaporn Rerngronasa, Deputy Governor for International Marketing (Europe, Africa, Middle East and Americas). The other person is Mr. Serirat Prasutanond, President of Airport of Thailand, Representatives from Thai Airways International and Bangkok Metropolitan Administration.

This year, I am happy to report that we have some very newsworthy stories to tell. We are extremely proud that Thailand has pulled off a remarkable recovery in our travel industry last year, and today I will be try and shed some light on the strategies that helped bring this about as well as our plans going forward.

We have been through many crises in the last decade, such as SARS, the tsunami and various other economic, political, natural and environmental crises. Hence, we knew how to respond to the latest crisis, and we did.

#### **OVERVIEW OF THAI TOURISM IN 2010**

Distinguished guests,

Firstly, let me talk about Thailand Tourism Overview and Marketing Strategies.

In 2010, the TAT and Thai Airways International both celebrated our 50th anniversaries. It was also a personally important moment for me because I assumed the governorship of the TAT in January 2010. The world was emerging from the 2008-09 global economic recession and there was plenty of hope and optimism. Many plans had been laid to make our 50th anniversary celebrations a grand success.

However, as everyone knows, we live in a world in which the next crisis always seems to be just around the corner. Thailand was hit by political unrest in the months of April-May 2010, which seriously affected visitor arrivals. However, we have been through many crises in the last decade, such as SARS, the tsunami and various other economic, political, natural and environmental crises. Hence, we knew how to respond to the latest crisis, and we did. Thanks to the policy support of the Royal Thai Government, the hard work of all the government agencies, and all the airlines serving Thailand, the private sector and all our supporters and partners abroad, we were able to make a remarkable recovery and end our 50th anniversary year on a positive note.

International visitor arrivals to Thailand totalled 15.84 million in 2010, a good growth of 12% over 14.14 million in 2009. From available statistic, Thailand received 415 billion baht (Euro 9.8 billion), up 26% for tourism revenue during January – September 2010. We are expecting to receive 586 billion baht (Euro 14 billion) by the year 2010.

For 2011, the TAT is targeting 16.8 million international visitor arrivals with projected revenue earnings of 632 billion baht (Euro 15 billion) in tourism revenue.



### **STRATEGIES FOR 2011**

The reason we are here with you today at ITB because we want to work with you to grow outbound tourist traffic to Thailand. Please allow me to outline how we aim to support you and how you can be a part of the Amazing Thailand team as we move forward.

First of all, we will strengthen the Thailand brand image through a campaign based on the "Amazing Thailand Always Amazes You" tagline. It will be incorporated into all of our marketing activities for Thai travel and tourism products.

Today, the world's currently focus on the subject of maintaining the balance of nature and promoting sustainable tourism in all dimensions for example Economic + Social + Environment. Therefore, in 2011 TAT has focused on maintaining the balance of tourism in various dimensions such as:

**Environment:** Many popular tourist areas are becoming congested and victims of over-development. However, TAT's cluster development policy, which involves promoting tourism to areas around the popular tourist destinations in order to prevent congestion there, while distributing visitors to new areas they may not have previously seen.

**Length of Stay:** Thailand is proving popular for both short-term and long-term stay visitors. Many retirees and senior citizens are increasingly making Thailand their second home during the cold winter months.

**Thailand as a year-round destination:** The winter is traditionally Thailand's peak travel season, when travellers from northern climates seek a break from the cold weather and Australians have their major school term break. However, TAT aims to balance the low season with the high season by promoting "Green Tourism" to position Thailand as a year-round destination.

Domestic Tourism and International Tourism: TAT is already highly focused on international tourism, we will encourage greater domestic tourism as a part of life for Thais and Thailand residents. This will help to reduce Thai tourism's exposure to international visitors.

All these strategies will help us make our marketing efforts more sustainable too.

Now I will discuss some of our key strategies for tourism development in the near term. The most recent strategy again capitalises on our geographical advantage and targets transit and stopover passengers at Suvarnabhumi airport.

In 2010, transit passengers through Thailand's airports totalled 3.42 million. This is a captive market that we need to capitalise on. Hence, we have joined forces with a broad range of industry alliance partners to launch a seven-month campaign to attract more transit tourists and stopover visitors.

The "Bangkok Stop Over Amazing Offers" campaign is designed to increase the attraction of stopping over in Bangkok as a transit hub and help "convert" today's stopover tourists into tomorrow's extended-stay tourists. It will also help enhance the awareness and exposure of the mainstream global tourism campaign "Amazing Thailand Always Amazes You".

The TAT is finalising the details of the campaign with the prospective alliance partners, such as, Thai Airways International, Association of Thai Travel Agents (ATTA), Thai Hotels Association (THA), Thailand Restaurant Association, Bangkok Metropolitan Administrative, Thailand Convention Exhibition Bureau (TCEB), the State Railway of Thailand, Airport Rail Link and Bangkok Transit System (BTS).

This project will start in April 2011. We have chosen this ITB for the soft launch. Target markets are transit travellers from key European cities, especially Paris, Moscow and London.





Germany used to be the top performing market for Thailand in the 1990s and then got overtaken by the UK and is now danger of being overtaken by Russia.

55

### **EUROPEAN MARKET: GLOBAL ECONOMIC CHANGES**

Arrivals from Europe have historically played a major role in the development of our tourism industry, and we are glad to see this continuing to be the case.

Arrivals from Europe totalled 4.3 million in 2010, up 7% over 4.05 million visitors in 2009. This was very encouraging for us because the years 2008-09 were marked by the global economic crisis and we had anticipated some impact in 2010 too. However, the fact that the European market recovered strongly is proof of our claim that Thailand remains an extremely desirable and value for money destination amongst European visitors.

The United Kingdom topped the list with 818,000 arrivals, followed by Germany 612,000 and Russia 611,000. However, I would like to add that we would like to see the German tour operators working harder to maintain their position in terms of arrivals. Germany used to be the top performing market for Thailand in the 1990s and then got overtaken by the UK and is now danger of being overtaken by Russia.

In January – September 2010, European visitors stayed an average of 15 days and spent an average of 3,517 baht (or Euro 83) per person per day, generating about 158 billion baht (or Euro3.57 billion) for the Thai economy.

Our market profile statistics show that 86% of European visitors are independent travellers.

On the aviation front, aviation capacity from European countries to Thailand in 2010 totalled 12,070 flights and 3.86 million seats. Germany led the list with a total of 2,000 flights and 738,000 seats, followed by UK with 1,700 flights and 618,000 million seats and Russia 1,400 flights and 441,000 seats.

In 2011, European visitors to Thailand are expected to total 4.45 million.



		% Share		
			Drofile of	
2,912,244	+ 10.11	59.03	Profile of	
2,021,190	+ 19.97	40.97	European Mark	cet
628,748	+ 30.86	12.74		
1,481,016	+ 22.93	30.02		
1,168,089	+ 14.12	23.68	Average Growth Rate 1987-1999	+ 8.66 %
954,033	+ 7.79	19.34	Average Growth Rate 2000-2011	+ 7.76 %
701,548	- 4.64	14.22	Average Growth Rate 1987-2011	+ 8.26 %
			2011	
1,849,755	+ 16.76	37.49		
3,083,679	+ 12.33	62.51	Average Length of Stay	15.63 Days
			Average Expenditures (person/day)	% Δ
			(Baht) 3,848.62	+ 3.03
841,528	+ 32.18	17.06	(US\$) 126.23	+ 7.08
4,091,906	+ 10.80	82.94	Revenue	
			(Million Baht) 296,765.60	+ 26.20
			(Million US\$) 9,733.21	+ 31.16
2,164,695	+ 29.35	43.88	Note: Exchange rate 1 US\$ = 30.49 Baht	
970,469	+ 4.63	19.67		
533,008	- 3.19	10.80		
686,206	+ 13.95	13.91		
23,302	- 23.34	0.47		
555,754	+ 1.90	11.27		
	2,021,190 628,748 1,481,016 1,168,089 954,033 701,548 1,849,755 3,083,679 841,528 4,091,906 2,164,695 970,469 533,008 686,206 23,302	2,021,190 + 19.97  628,748 + 30.86 1,481,016 + 22.93 1,168,089 + 14.12 954,033 + 7.79 701,548 - 4.64  1,849,755 + 16.76 3,083,679 + 12.33  841,528 + 32.18 4,091,906 + 10.80  2,164,695 + 29.35 970,469 + 4.63 533,008 - 3.19 686,206 + 13.95 23,302 - 23.34	2,021,190 + 19.97 40.97  628,748 + 30.86 12.74 1,481,016 + 22.93 30.02 1,168,089 + 14.12 23.68 954,033 + 7.79 19.34 701,548 - 4.64 14.22  1,849,755 + 16.76 37.49 3,083,679 + 12.33 62.51  841,528 + 32.18 17.06 4,091,906 + 10.80 82.94  2,164,695 + 29.35 43.88 970,469 + 4.63 19.67 533,008 - 3.19 10.80 686,206 + 13.95 13.91 23,302 - 23.34 0.47	European Mark  628,748 + 30.86

### STRATEGIES FOR EUROPEAN MARKET

Ministry of Tourism and Sports

Our marketing strategy for Europe in 2011 will focus on maintaining the leisure market while putting more emphasis on promoting family travellers, repeat visitors and niche-market customer segments such as Golf, Ecotourism and Health & Wellness sectors.

Tourism Authority of Thailand. (TAT)

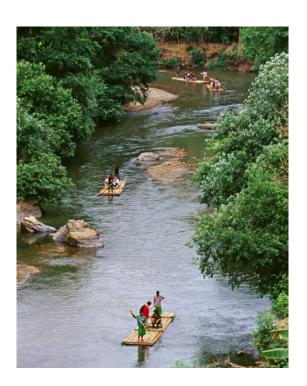
Late last year, heads of seven TAT office directors from Moscow, Dubai, Rome, Frankfurt, Paris, Stockholm and London met and undertook an ind-depth analysis of prevailing economic conditions, demographic changes and evolving consumer lifestyles before finalising the new strategy which is primarily directed at increasing the flow of upmarket visitors.

Maintaining leisure market: TAT will place emphasis on maintaining the country's share of the global leisure market by targeting repeat visitors which now account for 63 per cent of the total and pursuing first-time visitors in new markets such as East Europe and CIS.



We can now boast
a broad range of
products in
the fields of
responsible tourism,
sustainability,
and ecotourism.

55



Thailand remains a major long haul and the best value for money destination for the European visitors in Asia. In addition, Thailand has also been voted to be "Best Destination" for Sweden and Norway market.

Destination for family travellers: Our broad range of accommodation and exemplary service standards are perfectly placed to serve family travellers. At the same time, there are many activities for families to do together such as golf, spa and wellness and medical tourism.

Thailand is already very popular among golfers in Europe. The TAT London office now plans to build on this by capitalizing on the new trend: golfing families travelling together.

Wellness and medical tourism is a growth customer segment from Europe. Special roadshows will be organised in five countries in cooperation with Thai hospitals and other health & wellness facilities.

In addition, TAT London will focus on "Family World Wide" by organizing "Father & Son, Mom & Me" campaigns. This campaign will be aimed at family travellers to undertake activities targetted at their personal preferences. Hence, fathers can play golf, mothers can enjoy a spa and cooking class, and children can participate in many play and fun activities.

Repeating visitors plus new destination: Thailand has a large segment of repeat travellers from Europe. In May 2011, all seven TAT offices in the Europe region are to launch an Ecotourism / Thailand Go Green campaign. International Buyers, Sellers and Media will be invited to join this campaign, which will also include special events in Thailand. Among the markets that are demonstrating a strong demand for sustainable tourism products are United Kingdom, Scandinavia and Germany.

We can now boast a broad range of products in the fields of responsible tourism, sustainability, and ecotourism. These products include numerous villages nationwide which have been surveyed and qualified for inclusion under an European Union-funded initiative called Community-Based Tourism (CBT), as well birdwatching trips, eco-friendly diving, bicycling tours and nature walks.

The TAT together with TEATA and the European Union has just organised a fam trip for European buyers and media to publicise the CBT villages and numerous other grassroots and eco-friendly products along four suggested routes covering different parts of North, Northeast and Central Thailand. The carefully-planned itineraries were designed to showcase the best of Thai cultural heritage as well as the preservation of traditional Thai life, supporting communities' natural resources management, art, wisdom, architecture, agriculture, gastronomy and wellness.

Thailand has also produced a special booklet called Go Responsible Ecotourism and Enjoy Thailand (GREET) which features a range of such programs and products nationwide.

### **MAJOR PROJECTS FOR EUROPEAN REGION IN 2011**

TAT plans to focus on others such as the growing number of women travellers, wedding and honeymooners. Also in the pipeline are high-profile campaigns that involve celebrities, well-known personalities and European superstars.

Beauty and The Star: TAT is seeking to broaden its exposure among the female market by marketing Thailand as a backdrop destination for beauty pageant and reality show top model contests in the European countries. Women travellers will be targeted by working with organisers of European beauty pageants for the widely-watched TV broadcasts. In 2011, the TAT has got the rights for the Miss France, Miss Poland, Miss Czech Republic, Miss Belgium and Miss Slovak pageants.





Thailand I Love U "Ya Vas La Blu": TAT will invite Russian celebrity couples to get married in Thailand and invite media to participate in the wedding ceremony.

"Diving with Super Star": Specifically in the German market, the TAT will invite a German supermodel to be a presenter of a filming-diving series in Thailand.

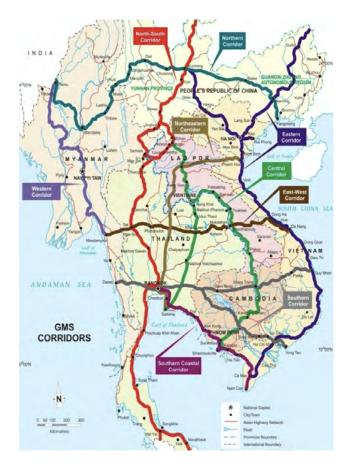
#### **SOCIAL MEDIA AND NETWORKS**

No tourism marketing promotion can ignore the impact of online media and social networking, in which we are aggressively expanding our efforts even as the influence of printed media and television declines. For the main TAT and in-market websites, we will introduce two-way communications and add more activities to engage visitors. TAT will also add value to the in-market websites by developing them into a channel to offer special deals to our business partners, so we can highlight the special packages you offer to customers.

Our websites and others will be used to maximum effect to provide the latest information on Amazing Thailand and Amazing Products, and we will provide information about Thailand via mobile phones, and are even considering delivering informative tourism content through games via mobile phones. QR Code and E-book will also be launched. Our aim is to drive the demand for travel to Thailand that will bring more customers in through the doors of your travel agency.

Another online marketing and social media channel which we utilising to very good effect is the Thailand Fan Club which now has 56,020 members amongst consumers, and growing strongly. A special consumer relationship marketing campaign will be launched directly targeted at the Fan Club members by offering a range of privileges to members who have travelled to Thailand more than 10 times.

We particularly proud to have received the PATA Gold Awards 2011 on Marketing, Primary Government Destination "Amazing Thailand social networking" and "Amazing Thailand Mobile Application" in the category of marketing campaign awards.



### THAILAND AS GATEWAY OF ASEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY IN 2015 AND MEKONG SUB-REGION

Now I would like to focus on our role in regional tourism. There is no doubt that Thailand's geographical advantage at the heart of Asia has been a major factor in our tourism performance. If location, location, location, is the key to success in the hotel industry, it applies equally to tourism destinations at large. Our geographical advantage is clearly an important competitive advantage.

Firstly, the world-class Suvarnabhumi International Airport has played a critical role in facilitating visitor arrivals since its opening in 2006. Today, it handles just under 100 domestic and foreign scheduled airlines, with many more charter carriers.

As 80% of all visitor arrivals to Thailand enter through Bangkok, the airport has given a new impetus to travel & tourism throughout the region.

The development of surface transport will also be important for future travel to and through the entire region. Thailand's location makes it the natural hub of the Greater Mekong Subregion. A number of significant roads, highways, and infrastructure improvements continue to link us more closely with our neighbouring countries of Cambodia, Lao PDR., Myanmar, Vietnam, as well as Southern China. The 1,200 kilometre R3A Highway between Thailand and Lao PDR is complete and reaches Kunming, China. This will allow visitors from Malaysia and Singapore to drive through Thailand through Laos all the way to China.

Another key road network is known as the East-West Economic Corridor (EWEC) -- the R9, linking Vietnam, Laos, Thailand and Myanmar. The East-West Economic Corridor which ends at Vietnam's Da Nang City help integrate the region's transportation and pave the way for the ASEAN Community which will materialise in the next five years. It will also open its transportation to South China Sea and connect with countries outside the region.

The air and road linkages will be further strengthened via rail links. With help from the Chinese government, Thailand is planning to proceed with its first high-speed railway that will run all the way from South Thailand to the northern border with Laos.

At the 12th ASEAN Summit in January 2007, the ASEAN Leaders affirmed their strong commitment to accelerate the establishment of an ASEAN Community by 2015. This is similar to the European community and will transform ASEAN into a region with free movement of goods, services, investment, skilled labour, and freer flow of capital. Today, the TAT and the Thai tourism business are working to improve service standard and enhancing their competitiveness in preparation for the changes to come. There will be both advantages and disadvantages, but like here in Europe, we do believe that the advantages will outweigh the disadvantages.

Our Tourism Council of Thailand (TCT) has laid out an eight-step strategy as a guideline for the development of the tourism industry. This includes improving the country's overall competitiveness, focusing on quality tourists, working with tourism organisations outside Thailand and helping local communities to create new tourism products. Most of these strategies are designed to help the small- and medium-sized operators who we feel will be most affected and will need all the help they can get.



### PARTNERSHIPS WITH TOUR OPERATORS AND MEDIA

The other way in which TAT will support you is through partnerships. We are encouraging joint marketing and advertising with special offers for trade partners. TAT is implementing more focused and targeted online marketing management to update our trade partners with the latest information on travel and tourism products and services. We will tap into new social media channels and digital opportunities to promote market segments.

TAT will also ensure we keep our travel partners and your frontline staff updated with details about new developments, products and services in Thailand, and will continue to broaden our strategic alliances. We will also organize briefings and seminars for tour companies as well as agent and media educational trips.

#### **EVENT UPDATES**

Finally, let me give you some upcoming events for this year.

Mega Fam Trip for Songkran Festival: we will organise a Mega Fam Trip during Songkran festival on 10-13 April 2011 by inviting over 500 media representatives worldwide to visit Thailand and experience the Songkran festival.

In 2011, major events which will attract considerable interest in Europe are the World Sports Tourism Conference, World Sports Destination Expo (WSDE), International Sports Tourism Conference and the World Travel Award (ASIA) Ceremony, all of which will be held between September 29 - October 2, 2011.

These events are being supported by the TAT, the Sports Authority of Thailand and the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau.

World Sport Destination Expo is the only global exhibition and business forum dedicated to showcasing the full spectrum of sports tourism related products and services. It is expected to attract 1,000 – 1,200 people.

The World Travel Awards Asia & Australasia Gala Ceremony 2011 will be held on 29 September 2011. Broadcast on BBC World, it is designed to recognise excellence in the world's travel and tourism industry.

### **CONCLUSION**

Distinguished guests, dear friends,

I hope this briefing has given you a quick snapshot of some of our new products, policies and promotions. I would like to end by thanking all our partners and friends in Germany, Europe and many other parts of the world for their friendship, commitment and support. Thank you for your time and for being with us today.

# MESSAGE TO INDIAN VISITORS: MEET "AMITABH BACHCHAN" AT MADAME TUSSAUDS BANGKOK



Mr. Suraphon Svetasreni *Governor* 

### PATA TRAVEL MART MEDIA BRIEFING 8 SEPTEMBER 2011 NEW DELHI, INDIA

On behalf of the Tourism Authority of Thailand and the Thai tourism industry, it is a pleasure for me to welcome you all here. Thank you all for being with us this afternoon.

Firstly, I would like to express my warm appreciation and thanks to our generous hosts in New Delhi for their tremendous hospitality and excellent arrangements. We have all been overwhelmed by the warm welcome and high standards of service that we have received everywhere.

On behalf of the Tourism Authority of Thailand and the Thai tourism industry, it is a pleasure for me to welcome you all here. Thank you all for being with us this afternoon.

Firstly, I would like to express my warm appreciation and thanks to our generous hosts in New Delhi for their tremendous hospitality and excellent arrangements. We have all been overwhelmed by the warm welcome and high standards of service that we have received everywhere.

The peoples of Thailand and India have a shared history and culture dating back thousands of years. Both our religion Buddhism and the Thai language can trace their origins back to India. Our countries are



thriving democracies, with deep agricultural traditions. Many Indian traders from North and West India came to Thailand in the 19th century to set up thriving businesses. Today, many of our hotels in central Bangkok are owned by Thai-Indian businessmen. Our peoples have a lot in common. It is something I never forget each time I come to India.

I also would like to pay tribute to Thailand's strong ties with PATA. Bangkok has been the headquarters of PATA since 1998. We are happy to have supported PATA over the years and wish it continued success. Recently, PATA has been able to add a new chapter in Chiang Rai in North Thailand and plans to add one soon in Phuket in South Thailand. These are positive moves and will certainly help us both upgrade the standards of our tourism industry as well as attract more visitors.

Distinguished media members,

What you have just seen is a very brief clip of our new Hearing the Sunshine promotional minisite that will be posted on various Internet websites. We hope it will generate a good response in India.

Today, I will begin by giving you a few details on the current status of Thai tourism. Then I will discuss our marketing strategies for 2012 and end with an outline of some of our new products and upcoming events.

#### THAILAND TOURISM UPDATE

In January-July 2011, visitor arrivals totalled 11.17 million, up 26.5% over the same period of 2010. For 2011, we are targeting 16 million visitors and foreign exchange earnings of 636 billion baht (USD 19.19 billion). That is a conservative figure. In fact, I am optimistic that international tourist arrivals could reach 18 million with expected income of 700 billion baht.

India is today the biggest source-market for visitors from South Asia and one of our fastest growing markets overall. It is one of what we call the RICHI countries, (Russia, India, China, Indonesia). Together, these four countries form a catchment area of huge demographic and



## When the Indian economy started becoming an international powerhouse, we were among the first to realise its potential.

**55** 

economic potential, all within medium-haul flying range from Bangkok. These markets are going to be priorities for us in future, especially to help us deal with the challenges of the upheavals in global economic conditions, such as those we are now seeing in the United States and Europe.

In 2007, Indian visitor arrivals totalled 536,356, up 16.65% over 2006, crossing the half-million mark for the first time. In 2010, the arrivals figure had shot up to 791,185, a 28.74% increase over 2009.

In January-July 2011, India became the sixth largest source market for Thailand with total arrivals of 552,000, up 36.2% over the same period of 2010. If this rate of growth continues, we project Indian arrivals will cross the one-million mark by 2012. Effectively, they will have doubled in just five years – a remarkable achievement indeed.

This is largely the result of four important factors: facilitation, accessibility, affordability and your own growing economy.

When the Indian economy started becoming an international powerhouse, we were among the first to realise its potential, especially in view of the fact the vast majority of Indian metros are only about four hours flying time from Bangkok. In 2003, we upgraded our former marketing rep to a full-fledged office in New Delhi in 2003 and opened a second office in Mumbai in 2009. At around the same time, the Royal Thai government included Indians on the visa-on-arrival nationalities.

Alongside, accessibility also grew rapidly. I remember the days of the old aviation traffic rights regimes when there used to be barely 14 flights a week by our national carriers. Today, there are there are 157 direct weekly services between Bangkok and major Indian cities including Delhi (59), Kolkata (28), Mumbai (57), Guahati (2), Hyderabad (4) and Chennai (7) by 10 Airlines such as Air India, Air Asia, Bangkok Airways, Cathay Pacific Airways, Jet Airways, Kingfisher Airlines, Philippine Airlines, Royal Bhutan Airlines, Thai Airways International and Indigo.

This month IndiGo became yet another airline to launch daily flights to Bangkok from both Mumbai and Delhi. At the Press conference, the President of IndiGo was asked if there is now too much capacity on this route. He replied to the contrary, noting that in fact the demand was rising far ahead of the growth in capacity. It was very encouraging to hear that.

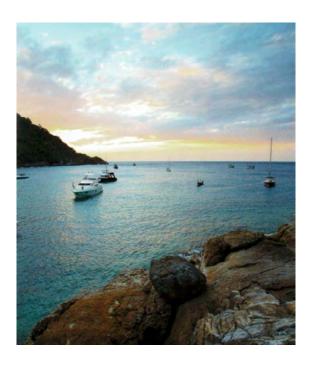
As for affordability, I think you all know that Indians find that having a nice holiday or holding a business event in Thailand is far more affordable than at home. We have effectively become an extension of your domestic market.

Raising the profile of the Thai tourism industry has been a challenging task. Our success is due to the strong partnerships that we have forged with the Indian tourism industry as well as the hard work of our local offices and staff. I am glad to note that this has been recognised. This year, the TAT was awarded the Today's Traveller Award for Most Innovative Promotion of International Tourism in 2011.

### **2012 MARKETING STRATEGIES**

People are always
amazed by the
ability of our tourism
industry to
recover from
domestic political
crises.

55



Thailand has not only physical product diversity, but our country also has a special emotional bond which connects the Kingdom to our visitors from all over the world. That is why our tourism slogan is very accurate, Amazing Thailand still Always Amazes You. For example, people are always amazed by the ability of our tourism industry to recover from domestic political crises. As you know, we had an airport shutdown in November 2008 for 10 days, and a six-week political crisis in 2010. Inspite of these events, which severely affected the tourism industry, our bounceback has always been amazingly quick.

Hence, the successful "Amazing Thailand Always Amazes You" theme, will remain the brand promise to build up the country's strong brand and positioning as a destination that offers tremendous value-for-money, a unique culture, a wide variety of experiences to visitors and to reinforce the many aspects of "Thainess" that are so appealing to visitors from all over the world.

For 2012, we have set a target of 19.5 million visitors with 760 billion baht for tourism income. Generally speaking, our Marketing Strategies for 2011-12 will focus on two key themes: 1) Promote balanced tourism in various dimensions; and 2) Strengthen and sharpen Thailand's brand image.

66

We have also taken major steps forward in capitalising on the digital marketing era to strengthen Thailand's tourism brand.

**55** 





The first point is very important. Promoting the concept of balance strategies means ensuring that both economic gain does not come at the expense of ecological destruction. Our responsibility is to market and promote tourism to Thailand. Although environmental issues, including law enforcement, zoning, etc, come under the purview of the Ministry of Tourism and other environmental agencies in Thailand, we at the TAT are constantly working to boost awareness and the incentives to ensure that the entire industry realises the importance of sustainability and the awareness for "Responsible Tourism" among tourism stakeholders.

The balanced strategy also includes maintaining a good mix of repeat and first-time travellers, probing new markets while consolidating our existing markets, ironing out the peaks and troughs between high and low seasons in our arrivals, distributing visitors between our urban and rural areas, and ensuring a good mix of customer segments from High Net Worth Individuals to backpackers.

We have also taken major steps forward in capitalising on the digital marketing era to strengthen Thailand's tourism brand. One very popular move was a launch of the "Smile Land" social-media games apps designed around two of the country's iconic images – the whizzing trishaw known as the tuk-tuk and the extremely popular Thai food. Our efforts are also being recognized -- we are particularly proud to have received the PATA Gold Awards 2011 on Marketing, Primary Government Destination "Amazing Thailand social networking" and "Amazing Thailand Mobile Application" in the category of marketing campaign awards.

### **PRODUCTS**

The past 10 years have witnessed a remarkable improvement in our product range. Today, Bangkok has become one of the world's most exciting tourism cities. The shopping, nightlife and restaurants are just amazing. I am proud to say that this includes the improved quality of our Indian restaurants which cater to all the dietary requirements from Jain vegetarian to South Indian dosas and Bengali masalas. These improved products are a bedrock of our marketing campaign in India.

Wedding and Honeymoon: In recent years, Thailand is becoming increasingly popular among Indian wedding couples and honeymooners. Many Indian couples are tying the knot in a land renowned for its sense of grace and style, following customs and ceremonies with rich roots in Buddhist culture. The secluded, all-inclusive resorts are perfect for honeymoons.



In addition, TAT plans to create a special documentary on "Dream Destination for Wedding and Honeymoons" to introduce special destinations in Thailand, organise special programs for specific groups, including creating a specialist network of consultants to offer guidance and advice.

**Golf:** Indian visitors are being increasingly seen walking the greens at our golf courses nationwide. There are at least a few courses in or within easy reach of all major cites. Most of the newer courses offer accommodation on site or nearby, plus recreational facilities for the whole family. For the more adventurous, there are older, natural courses in remote areas around the country.







**Thai Food:** Thai food is famous all over the world due to its uniqueness, lack of fatty content and rich herbal ingredients. Thai cooking classes are becoming hugely popular among Indian visitors.

**Film Location:** Many Indian filmmakers are finding Thailand a good place to shoot movies and TV serials. In 2010, Thailand received 578 foreign production crews. Of these, India was the largest market with a total of 128 productions, followed by Japan 123 and Europe 91. In 2008, for the first time, Thailand hosted one of India's well-known Bollywood film awards ceremonies, the IIFA Awards.

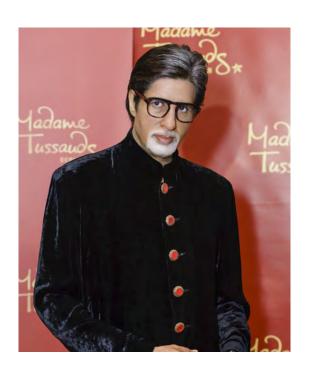
**Theme Parks:** For the Indian family market, there are a number of theme parks that are perfect for children, such as Safari World, Siam Park and Splash Jungle. In the next few years, new attractions such as Asiatique: the Riverfront, will vastly expand the lure of visiting Bangkok.

You will be happy to know that your superstar Amitabh Bachchan is now officially the first Bollywood star to have his very own wax figure produced and put on display at Madame Tussauds Bangkok – Southeast Asia's first location of the world's best loved wax museum. His likeness will be there to greet visitors and his fans from India and around the globe.



Strong bilateral relations between Thailand and India in all fields play a very important role in tourism growth. Free trade agreements will play a vital role in enhancing these relations.

55



### LOOK EAST POLICY: INDIA'S TIES WITH ASEAN

There is no doubt that strong bilateral relations between Thailand and India in all fields play a very important role in tourism growth. Free trade agreements will play a vital role in enhancing these relations. By 2015, the member countries of ASEAN with their combined populations of 600 million people will be linked by a free trade agreement to be known as the ASEAN Economic Community. This population base will be enhanced even further with the inclusion of India's 1.2 billion people as part of a broader free trade agreement between ASEAN and India. An Agreement on Trade-in-Goods has been concluded after negotiations over six years and business relations are expected to take-off in the near future.

In addition to Thailand, ASEAN members include Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore, Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar. Trade between India and ASEAN has now reached US\$ 55.21 billion as compared to only US\$ 7.84 billion in 2001-2002. India is today ASEAN's sixth largest trading partner and eighth largest investor. Other areas of stepped up cooperation include science & technology, tourism, transport & infrastructure, information & communication technology, space technologies, agriculture, energy etc.

### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

Before I conclude, I would like to personally invite you all to join us in observing the auspicious occasion of His Majesty the King's 7th Cycle Birthday Anniversary on 5th December 2011. This event will be marked with some grand celebrations such as the Royal Barge Procession down the Chao Phraya river, the "River of Kings" on October 22, 2011 and the Royal Flora Ratchaphruek between 9 November 2011 and 15 February 2012 in Chiang Mai. These will be magnificent events that will truly amaze visitors. I would strongly recommend starting advance planning for reservations and seats.

I will be happy to take a few questions.

Thank you all for coming, and Sawasdee khrap.

# FLOODS: PICKING UP THE PIECES AFTER YET ANOTHER CRISIS



### Mrs. Juthaporn Rerngronasa

Deputy Governor for International Marketing (Europe, Africa, Middle East and the Americas)

### WTM LONDON NETWORKING LUNCH SPEECH 7 NOVEMBER 2011

It is always a pleasure to be at the WTM London and to renew our strong and long-standing relationships with the UK travel & tourism industry. As always, we are encouraged by the strong presence at the Thailand pavilion and your continued support and interest.

Today, I will update you on the latest developments in Thai tourism and provide you with some details on how we plan to continue to work with you to build awareness, maintain Thailand's competitive edge and convert consumer interest into actual bookings.

As you are aware, Thailand has been affected by some devastating floods. Many Tourism destinations have been affected, including Bangkok and Central Plains. However, destinations in other regions such as Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Phuket, Krabi remained unaffected and were always open for business.

Our priority now is to ensure a quick recovery. The Royal Thai government is mobilising, along with the private sector, NGOs and people from all walks of life as we strive to pick up the pieces from yet another crisis.

We anticipate that life will be very much back to normal within a few weeks in time to help us proceed with events marking a number of royal occasions – the auspicious 7th cycle 84th birthday of His Majesty



the King, the 80th birthday of Her Majesty the Queen and the 60th birthday of HRH Crown Prince Vachiralongkorn. These will be celebrated in December and the TAT will provide further information closer to the date. Planned activities include the majestic Royal Barge Procession, the Royal Flora Horticultural Exposition in Chiang Mai and others.

Come what may, the TAT is committed to ensuring that UK remains one of our top source-markets from Europe. Until last year, the United Kingdom was the top market but has now been overtaken by Russia. Thailand welcomed more than 634,278 UK visitors during January – September 2011. In the same period, Russia generated arrivals of 659,239. Germany came in at Number Three spot with total arrivals of 462,484.

In 2010, UK visitors had an average length of stay of roughly 16 days per person per visit and generated an average daily expenditure of 3,600 baht or about (£73).

In recent years, we have been noticing that British visitors are coming to Thailand all year around rather than just in the winter months, as was the case in the past. This is very good news as it shows that we are making progress in our efforts to reduce the seasonality factor. Another interesting statistic from the UK market is that in 2010, a total of 67 percent were repeat visitors and 94 percent were FIT. That is an extraordinarily high percentage of repeat visitors and certainly shows the high level of satisfaction we enjoy.

On the aviation front, as of September 2011, there were 35 direct scheduled flights per week between Bangkok and London being operated by four airlines – THAI Airways International, British Airways, Qantas and Eva Airways. Other airlines also bring visitors to Thailand through other points of UK and intermediary hubs like Dubai, Singapore, Hong Kong, etc. There should be some increase in flight capacity with Thai Airways planning to upgrade its aircraft type on the non-stop London-Bangkok route. Furthermore, in January 2012 Emirates will start flying from Dublin.



## TAT will commit to promoting our world class, luxury experiences and in particular our success in attracting the wedding and honeymoon market.

55

While it is true that the baht has strengthened against the pound, currency vagaries have affected many other countries of the world. Thailand still remains excellent value for the British tourist and remains competitive against the cost of holidaying elsewhere in Asia.

Indeed, hundreds of thousands of visitors from the UK and Ireland have been holidaying in Thailand for many years. Both markets have now reached a level where we cannot expect a large increase in visitor numbers each year. Therefore, we will be focusing our future efforts on specialised niche-market customer segments – such as repeat travellers and the family market. During this time of greater and continuing economic uncertainty we believe it is right to focus on these quality and niche sectors of the market as they are more likely to be 'recession proof'.

Thailand is and remains an affordable luxury destination with a long tradition of catering to everybody from backpackers to the luxury travel market. In June 2011, Bangkok was voted the World's Best-Value City in the June 2011 issue of the Sunday Times Travel Magazine, one of the most popular monthly travel magazines of the UK. The award also featured Bangkok as 'the Best Street Food on the Planet' where tourists can enjoy various kinds of food, both Thai and foreign, offered at inexpensive price on both sides of the streets.

Over the last two years TAT London has being promoting to the Family market and we were delighted to be shortlisted as Best Long Haul Family Destination in the recent Selling Long Haul Awards.

Golf tour operators and golf courses in Thailand report a healthy growth in business from the UK and Ireland. We have also recently hosted travel editors and celebrities from the Daily Telegraph, Sunday Times and the Mail on Sunday all of whom will be writing about our world class spa offering.

In the UK market beach resorts such as Khao Lak are growing in popularity and we continue to see more interest in Chiang Mai and Northern Thailand. At the end of this month twelve tour operators from the UK and Ireland will be visiting both Chiang Mai and Phuket to attend our travel marts in both these regions.

TAT will commit to promoting our world class, luxury experiences and in particular our success in attracting the wedding and honeymoon market.

In addition to our annual UK Green Travel Awards we have recently launched the 'Thailand Green Alliance'. This is a group of UK tour operators committed to promoting green and responsible tourism in Thailand. Meeting quarterly this group will be working with and advising TAT to put





together a green marketing plan that is forward thinking, consistent and sustainable.

Recently, a group of more than 50 invited travel agents and media in the Europe, Africa and Middle East region invited to survey Green Tourism products and services in Thailand. Invited as part of the "Thailand Goes Green" campaign organised by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), the group visited four suggested "Green Routes" nationwide between 13-17 October. These are:

- Lisu Lodge and Lanjia Lodge (Chiang Mai Chiang Rai)
- Loei Eco-Route: Along the scenic Khong River (Udon Thani Nong Khai Loei Phitsanulok)
- Green Escapes and Soft Adventure (Ratchaburi- Samut Songkhram Phetchaburi Hua Hin)
- The Flavours and Fragrances of Central Thailand (Amphawa Phetchaburi Hua Hin)

In addition, TAT has launched a micro-website "Thailand Goes Green", www.thailandgoesgreen. net to provide additional exposure for Green Tourism products and services in Thailand.

At the heart of all TAT's marketing activity is our friends and supporters from the UK and Irish travel industries. In 2012 our Friends of Thailand Club roadshow will be visiting 11 cities in the UK and Ireland and looking to meet over 1000 travel agents and tour operator sales staff. We are also continuing to invest heavily in our Partners on Demand marketing fund which supports joint tactical marketing campaigns with our tour operator partners.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thailand still have variety of products such as sand beach culture and hospitality of Thai people who are ready to welcome visitors from the UK & Ireland in the Miracle Year of Amazing Thailand 2011-2012.

I would like to thank all of you for joining us here today for your ongoing support and look forward to working closely with you to ensure Thailand remains a leading destination brand for UK travellers. Please do remember "Amazing Thailand Always Amazes You."

Thank you and Sawasdee kha.

# THAILAND THE GREATEST STORY IN GLOBAL TOURISM HISTORY

A 60TH ANNIVERSARY TRIBUTE TO THE TOURISM AUTHORITY OF THAILAND