

## Thailand eyes 1.5m tourists in only 10 days of current holiday season

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Dhaka: The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) is eyeing 1.56 million foreign travellers to visit the country between December 21, 2024 and January 1, 2025, a 16 per cent increase from the same period last year.

Tourism revenue is also anticipated to hit THB 45 billion (USD 1.3 billion) during this period, up 20 per cent from 2023.

About the estimate, Thapanee Kiatphaibool, Governor of TAT, said the increased numbers would be influenced by several strategic initiatives, including the changes to visa exemptions and the easing of immigration rules as well as the introduction of additional flights that have attracted more foreign tourists to Thailand.

There are also 30 new air routes from major markets, including China, South Korea, Taiwan, India, Scandinavia and France. Thailand also looks

to resume direct connectivity to the US, said reports.

Airlines have also geared up to meet demand through increased frequencies and larger aircraft. The recent introduction of Saudia's nonstop flights from Riyadh and Jeddah to Phuket is considered a milestone in expanding Thailand's reach in the Middle East, added reports.

As per the latest numbers released by the ministry, Thailand welcomed more than 32 million foreign tourists from January 1 to December 1, 2024, generating THB 1.5 trillion (USD 44 billion) in revenue. The top five source markets included China with over six million arrivals, followed by Malaysia, India, South Korea and Russia.

Thailand is also attracting travellers from new and emerging markets. Following the launch of Saudia's direct flights to Phuket, Tourism Authority of Thailand observed that Saudi arrivals surged by 28 per cent in 2024.

The popular leisure destination is now focusing on attracting high-end European travellers to maximise revenue and meet an upgraded target of 40 million tourists in 2025, generating THB 2.4 trillion (USD 71 billion).

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