

Thailand eyes tourist fee from April

- A Monitor Desk Report

Date: 13 January, 2022



Dhaka: Thailand is eyeing to collect a THB 300 (USD 9) fee from foreign tourists from April in an effort to develop its attractions and cover accident insurance for foreigners who are unable to pay the costs themselves, the country's authorities announced on January 12.

Thailand has been hit hard by the travel plunge following the pandemic with only 200,000 arrivals in 2021, compared to 40 million in 2019.

Even recent efforts to revive the tourism sector of one of the most popular tourist destinations in Asia have been complicated by the rapid global spread of the Omicron variant of coronavirus.

"Part of the fee will be used to take care of tourists," Tourism Authority of Thailand governor Yuthasak Supasorn said.

"We've encountered times when insurance didn't have coverage for tourists ... which became our burden to take care of them," he mentioned, adding, funds would also be used to upgrade tourism infrastructure.

The fee adds to a list of requirements for foreign tourists seeking entry to Thailand, which include pre-payment for Covid-19 tests, hotel accommodation or quarantine, and having

insurance with Covid-19 treatment coverage of at least USD 50,000.

Thailand waived its strict quarantine measures in November in place of a "Test and Go" scheme for vaccinated visitors, but later they suspended that in late December over concerns about the spread of the Omicron variant.

The new fee will be priced in with airline tickets and is part of the government's sustainable tourism plans, government spokesman Thanakorn Wangboonkongchana noted.

Thanakorn added that Thailand expects between 5-15 million foreign arrivals in 2022, depending on policies in place in its main tourism hubs. However, Thailand's leading business groups on January 12 forecast foreign tourist arrivals for 2022 to be 5-6 million.

Foreign tourists are expected to generate THB 800 billion (USD 23.97 billion) in 2021, he further noted.