

Indonesia

"The Ultimate in Diversity"

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Seram Island, an undisturbed paradise of virgin forests and pristine beaches.

جزيرة سيرام، جنة من غابات عزراء وبحار نضرة.

The Indonesian Ministry of Culture and Tourism took an active part in the EMITT exhibition which was held in Istanbul last February. It had a distinguished stand visited by lots of people and media representatives. There was also the press conference attended by most of the journalists and media representatives. The exhibition ended with "Indonesia Night" which was full of music and folkloric dances reflecting the huge cultural diversity of Indonesia.

The Indonesian ambassador to Turkey, Mr. Amin Rianom, and his wife took part in all the activities. He delivered a speech which described the regions with tourist attractions and the great diversity that Indonesia offers its visitors. He said that the Tsunami has affected only one of the 17,000 which receive 5 million visitors from all over the world.

A film showing the diversity of tourist sites was then screened, followed by a talk by Mr. Syamsul Lussa, director of international promotions in the Indonesian Tourism Ministry. He revealed many interesting facts about Indonesia, the world's fourth most populous country with an estimated population (in 2003) of 235 million. More than half the people live on Java, where Jakarta, Indonesia's capital and largest city, is located. Followers of Islam make up 87 percent of the population, making Indonesia the largest Islamic country in the world.

The main islands of Indonesia are Java (Jawa), Sumatra (Sumatera), and Sulawesi

(Celebes). The republic shares the island of Kalimantan (Borneo) with Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam.

With 40,000 species of flowering plants, including 3,000 trees and 5,000 orchids, Indonesia has a greater variety of flora than the tropical regions of Africa or the Americas. It is home to the very large perfumed corpse lily (Rafflesia). Orchids are also abundant, and Indonesia is home to the largest of all orchids, the tiger orchid.

Tropical rain forests prevail in the northern lowlands. Tall tropical hardwoods dominate the forests and provide good harvests of timber, resin, vegetable oil, and illipe nuts. Mangrove trees and nipa palm dominate the forests of the southern lowlands. The hill forests consist of oak and chestnut trees and mountain plants.

Indonesia has significant deposits of oil and natural gas: it produces more than 80 percent of South East Asia's oil and more than 35 percent of the world's liquefied gas. Small amounts of silver, gold, diamonds, and

rubies are also found. The seas surrounding Indonesia yield abundant saltwater fish, pearls, shells, and agar (a substance extracted from seaweed).

The average daily temperature range of Jakarta is 21° to 33°C (69° to 92°F) and varies little from winter to summer.

More than 600 languages and dialects are spoken in Indonesia, but Bahasa Indonesia is the official and most widely spoken tongue. Today, television programs, major newspapers, schools, and universities all use Bahasa Indonesia.

Rice is the staple food of most Indonesian dishes and its preparation varies between regions. The hot, spicy food from the Padang region can be found in specialized Padang restaurants throughout most of Indonesia, while most places have a local specialty, such as grilled fish and seafood in Makassar.

Indonesian Tourism

The government of Indonesia considers that tourism is one of the most important ➤

City Tourism



صياد يرمي شبابه من على مصطبة عائمة.

A fisherman throws his net from an off-shore fishing platform.

sectors from an economic point of view. It generates the second largest revenue for national income after oil and gas. In addition, tourism is also the means to strengthen nationalism, to bridge communication between the people of Indonesia as well as people from all over the world.

It generates employment opportunities for more than six million people. Some idyllic destinations like Bali, Lombok, Jogjakarta, Jakarta, Batam, and so forth, depend on tourism as the main economic generator.

All 33 provinces in Indonesia have their own specific attractions which may not be found in any other provinces. Because of the variety and diversity of the regions along with their products, mostly naturally and culturally based, the government restructured the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and gave it not only regulatory powers but also made it an executive body.

Marine Tourism

As it is an asset with the greatest potential, priority has been given to sustainable development of Indonesia's seas, islands and coastal communities. In this regard, the development of marine tourism has been placed at the forefront, with special emphasis on small islands' development. Eastern Indonesia, with its still pristine seas has great potential to attract the world's



Mount Bromo, East Java.

جبل برومو، شرق جاوا.



A silhouette of tribesmen in a warboat set against the setting sun.

افراد من قبيلة في مركب حربي بمواجهة غروب الشمس.

divers, surfers, yachts and cruise ships. Similarly, the cluster of 300 islands in the province of the Riau Islands, in the western part of Indonesia, also attracts investors.

The Impacts of Tsunami on Indonesia's Tourism

Despite the massive impact of the tsunami that paralyzed Indonesia's Aceh Province on 26 December 2004, total international arrivals to Indonesia increased to around 500,000 visitors from which 4.8 million visitors in 2003 became 5.3 million in 2004. The tsunami which struck at the end of the year and had minimal impact on the numbers.

There should be no reason for the figure to drop because the affected areas are mostly not recommended for foreign visitors. In addition, the popularly visited destinations are not affected at all.

North Sumatra is different. It is one of the recommended tourist destinations in Indonesia. In addition to its natural and

cultural attractions, Nias Island is a very famous destination for surfing. Since the impact of the tsunami on this island, the government announced that surfing is not recommended for the time being.

It is evident that the impact of the tsunami in Northern Sumatra is very limited. For that reason, several tourist sites in North Sumatra are totally normal and still recommended for a visit. In Sumatra Island itself, where Aceh shares the west point of the island with seven other provinces, the conditions are totally normal. All airports, trains, and land roads are open. This clearly indicates that the remaining 30 other provinces are totally unaffected and it is safe to visit. Unfortunately, some trip cancellations to Indonesia were unavoidable.

At the close of the event, a raffle was held and the representative of Islamic Tourism Magazine was among the winners. He, and other members of the audience, were given prizes of Indonesian artifacts presented by the ambassador's wife. ■