

# Thailand

## made rich by the goodness of its people and the beauty of its nature

>Bangkok - Motaz Othman

ITM was invited to visit the Kingdom of Thailand twice during the past three months. The first visit was to attend the Islamic Economic, Cultural and Tourism Conference, and the second was to cover a specialized tourism exhibition. I also visited Thailand, four years ago, in the company of journalists from the Gulf.



I noticed during those three visits that Thailand is rich in more ways than one, especially in culture and civilization. There is also the goodness of its inhabitants. Rare are the times when one is confronted with a problem in this country and where there are disputes among the locals. They live in peace and security.

I requested a meeting with an official of the Thai Ministry of Tourism in Bangkok and had the opportunity to interview Mr. Satit Nillwongse, Executive Director for Promotion in the Middle East, Europe and Africa. I asked him about the foundations of Thai tourism. He replied that Thailand is rich in natural sites, especially in the south of the country and on the island of Phuket and nearby islands, as well as the tolerant nature

of the Thai people. He also stressed the great infrastructure for tourism, such as hotels and resorts, as well as the large investment being pumped into the south. The damage caused by the tsunami, despite its severity, was quickly repaired.

He also explained that the capital is full of cultural and heritage tourist attractions, to satisfy all tastes, especially families. He also spoke of the important work facing Thailand in the field of MICE tourism. It is one of the best destinations for this type of tourism in the Asia Pacific region. He added that the northern region stages many cultural festivals.

To a question on the interests of Thailand in the tourists of the Middle East, Mr. Satit answered that the Middle East and the

Arabian Gulf are the subject of much attention from his country and that it is a very attractive market. He referred to the advanced health services offered by Thai hospitals and clinics which are known to all in the Middle East. Halal food is also served in major hotels. He also mentioned the equatorial climate in the country is characterized by the absence of excessive heat or humidity. Similarly, Thailand is famous for its precious stones and jewels are highly sought after by tourists.

In addition, he pointed out that many Arab airlines have a direct route to Bangkok. Thailand participates in Arab tourism exhibitions, especially the ATM in Dubai, and an office was opened in Dubai to promote tourism in Thailand. ■