

**Thai Tourism Industry Back To Normal Soon, Says PM
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By Jamaluddin Muhammad**

BANGKOK, Jan 30 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra believes the tourism industry in the country will soon be back to normal, following more countries lifting their terrorism alerts in this capital.

She said the ministry of foreign affairs would continue to explain the situation to other countries which Bangkok claimed, the problem arose from some misunderstanding on the matter.

"The Thai Government is in contact with the United States so that it could lift its travel warning, too," she told reporters after opening a tourism seminar here today.

China, Germany, France and Israel had withdrawn their travel advisories while 18 other countries, including the United States, Sweden and United Kingdom, still retained theirs.

The countries issued such travel advisories in stages since middle of this month, following possible terrorist attack against tourist areas in this capital in the near future.

A 48-year-old Lebanese terrorist suspect was detained in this city in the middle of this month and more than four tonnes of explosive materials were seized later.

Touching on new tourism initiatives put up by Thailand, Yingluck said the country was eyeing the middle-class Indian tourist market, especially for the wedding package.

"If we could just tap one per cent of the Indian market, we could attract 12 million middle-class Indian tourists to visit this country," she said.

During the seminar, the premier said the country was doing quite well for its tourism sector last year, despite facing many challenges, including the devastating flood.

She said that last year, Thailand recorded tourism growth of 20 per cent, with 19.1 million tourists and tourism revenue at 730 billion Baht (about RM73 billion).

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