

Tourist arrivals sky high

By Warisa Temram

ARRIVALS on the island during the first ten months of 2011 jumped more than 32 per cent year-on-year.

Jarus Phetpakdee, Acting Chief of the Phuket Provincial Commercial Affairs Office, revealed that Immigration Officers at Phuket Airport and Chalong Pier from January to October this year counted 2,034,479 [tourist] arrivals, up from about 1.5 million arrivals dur-

ing the same period last year.

Of this year's figure, he noted that 1,834,052 arrived by plane while 200,427 arrived by boat, including both cruise ships and private yachts.

Mr Jarus said that tourism performed particularly well in the first financial quarter due to it being high season. He believes tourists felt more confident about the political situation in Thailand, which was relatively peaceful compared with the same period during the

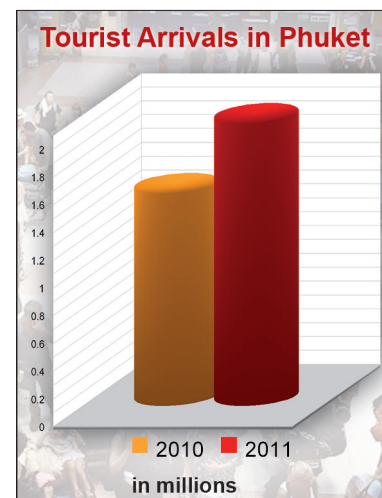
previous year.

He also gave credit to the comprehensive and ongoing, tourism marketing campaigning by the Thai government, noting that the majority of the island's tourists arrived from other Asian countries.

Mr Jarus pointed out that the second and third fiscal quarters were typically quieter, and noted fewer European tourists. He cited the economic turmoil in the Eurozone as the prime factor.

Recent floods in the central and northeastern parts of the country have not had a major impact on Phuket tourism, he said, pointing out that there are 40 direct international flights to Phuket [that do not require transit in Bangkok].

"There were 11,003 international inbound flights to Phuket during the first 10 months of the year, compared with 9,107 during the same period last year. That's an increase of 21 per cent year-on-year," he said.



Tourist arrivals in Phuket during the first 10 months of this year rose 32% from last year.

Construction modules to cut in-house costs

LABOR shortages, tight project deadlines, and inferior-quality construction materials will all have less of an impact upon the property development sector, thanks to an innovative construction technology currently being demonstrated in Phuket.

"Our Construction Module system replaces conventional construction methods that use columns, beams and drywall," explained Kenth Fredin, Chairman and CEO of Inzentive Technologies (Thailand) Ltd, the company spearheading this latest innovation in Thailand.

Kenth, a Swedish national, noted that his firm developed the system through research and development from its office and factory base in Samut Prakarn, just outside of Bangkok.

"After we've proven our product in Thailand, we plan to expand to markets across Southeast Asia, Asia and the Middle East," he said.

The company is on the verge of completing two demonstration projects including a villa at a resort in Kanchanaburi province and another development on Cape

Yamu in Phuket, he said.

At the core of the Inzentive's module system is a material known as "cement bonded particle board", which Kenth points out is like a wood-cement hybrid.

"It's got all the desirable characteristics of both wood and cement - it's strong and can be used in any type of structural element - yet it can be nailed into without cracking. It doesn't rot, attract fungus or termites and it doesn't burn," he said.

The material itself is not new, but the way it is applied is.

"Our system is based on a similar modular system that was invented in Northern Europe, more than 20 years ago," he notes.

Kenth went on to outline the clever-yet-simple system, which involves erecting an interior and exterior module wall in place of the temporary plywood forms used in conventional concrete formwork systems.

"The modules are transported to the site ready-made according to pre-planned project specs that have incorporated mechanical and reinforcement systems into their design.



EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE: Kenth Fredin (inset) says that his module system requires only a fraction of conventional project labor and time.

Working with a crew and crane, the modules are easily set in place.

Then the electrical conduits, plumbing, gas pipes and rebars are installed in the empty spaces before the cement is poured. After the cement dries, the modules are kept in place and serve as permanent, insulating walls that require only minor finishing touches," he explained.

The modules can also be used as slabs to form ceilings and floors. Since no beams or columns are required, wasted height space is minimized, he noted.

Kenth went on to highlight the

amount of time and labor saved on site, noting that his system requires only a fraction of the labor, and a third of the time required by conventional construction methods.

"We can finish a project in four months that would usually take a year. Since more time goes into planning and engineering at the factory, our system provides for up to 70 per cent faster completion on site. Conventional construction methods have basically remained much the same since World War II," he said.

Not only are project target dates dramatically reduced and the prod-

uct delivered faster, but the amount of labor required is only a fraction of what is usually required.

"To erect and concrete a single level floor plan, for example, we would need only a crew of four and a crane to complete the job in about ten days. The same job would call for up to 40 laborers and as much as three months by current means," he said.

Production efficiency doesn't detract from product quality, however.

Kenth noted that a key advantage of the system is the modules' insulating qualities, which from early on contribute to the integrity of the inner concrete form, and thus the overall structure.

"When the concrete is poured, the modules help the drying concrete maintain its moisture for a longer period, resulting in a stronger and more homogeneous structure.


"In tropical and humid climates like Thailand, moisture tends to evaporate quickly, which is why you'll see conventional methods applying plastic and water spray mechanisms. Our system doesn't need to do that and the result is a longer-lasting, crack-free structure," he said.

For more information, visit [W: Inzentiveasia.com](http://W:Inzentiveasia.com)

- Steven Layne

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