

Thailand to Temporarily Close Down Popular Beach

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Category : Lifestyle/Entertainment

Unlocking Word Meanings

Read the following words/expressions found in today’s article.

- 1. **popularize** / `pop yə lə raɪz / (v) – to make something famous
Example: The movie **popularized** the song.
- 2. **rehabilitate** / ,ri hə `bɪl ɪ ,teɪt / (v) – to bring back something or someone to a former good condition
Example: The organization hopes to **rehabilitate** the forest through tree-planting initiatives.
- 3. **influx** / `ɪn ,flʌks / (n) – the coming of a large number of people into a place
Example: The locals prepare hard for the peak season because they expect the **influx** of tourists.
- 4. **steeply** / stɪp li / (adv) – suddenly rising or falling
Example: The number of customers in the restaurant rose **steeply** because of good online reviews.
- 5. **dock** / dɒk / (v) – to tie a ship or boat at a pier
Example: After fishing for an entire afternoon, fishermen **dock** their boats at the pier by sunset.

Article

Read the text below.

Maya Bay, a beach in Thailand / `taɪ,lænd / **popularized** by a Hollywood film, has been ordered by authorities to close down annually.

Thailand’s National Parks and Wildlife Department decided to close the beach for four months each year. This move is to **rehabilitate** Maya Bay’s marine life, which deteriorated due to the **influx** of tourists in the island.

The number of visitors in Maya Bay rose **steeply** after it was featured in *The Beach*, a movie that starred Hollywood actor Leonardo DiCaprio in 2000. On average, Maya Bay accommodates around 4,000 tourists and 200 boats daily.

Aside from closing the beach, authorities also decided to limit the maximum number of island guests they would allow to only 2,000 a day. Boats, which sometimes cause damage to the island’s coral reefs, will also no longer be allowed to **dock** on Maya Bay.

A marine scientist who has been studying the island for 30 years witnessed Maya Bay’s deterioration. He said that compared to the island’s heavenly beauty long ago, it now looks pitiful and rundown. He added that giving Maya Bay its much-needed break can be the first step in helping the island return to its previous state.

Meanwhile, Thailand is not the only country that will be temporarily closing a famous destination to tourists.

The Philippine government also decided to temporarily shut down Boracay, an island famous for its white sand and crystal clear beaches. The island will be closed for six months, which is expected to cause losses in revenue amounting to Php 56 billion.

However, Philippine Department of Tourism undersecretary Frederick Alegre defended the island’s closure. He asserted that the move is not for gaining profit but for saving Boracay from further destruction.

Viewpoint Discussion

Enjoy a discussion with your tutor.

Discussion A

- Aside from losses in revenue, what do you think are the possible negative effects of closing Maya Bay and Boracay? Discuss.

- Which tourist destinations in your country do you think should also be closed temporarily? Why?

Discussion B

- If a place was featured in your favorite movie/show, would you be interested to visit it? Why or why not?

- What are the possible effects of featuring a place in a movie/show on locals? Discuss.