

Paradise losing: Asia's beaches

Notes & Cues:**Article:**

This week the Philippines will close down Boracay, its star holiday island, for six months. For years sewage has been indiscriminately dumped into the sea. Now the president calls it a "cesspool".

Maya Bay in Thailand, the backpacker getaway depicted in the film "The Beach", is a rubble-strewn, tourist-ravaged mess with 4, 000 visitors a day. It will shut in June for four months to recover. Last year Indonesian officials declared a "garbage emergency" across a 6km stretch of Bali.

Such man-made troubles have serious local consequences: 36, 000 jobs are at risk on Boracay, which accounts for a fifth of the country's tourism revenues.

Officials might experiment with capping the number of visitors or boosting fees for the most delicate tourist hotspots. Or they could divert holidaymakers to lesser-known getaways. For now, they have more immediate concerns: yesterday clean-up divers at Boracay began their work. It's a small start.

Summary: