



PRESS RELEASE

ITALIAN LIFTS BALI TRAVEL ADVICE

BALI, INDONESIA, December 19, 2003—Following a wave of concern voiced by Casa Grande Bali and travel industry members to the Ambassador of Italy to Indonesia Mr. Francesco M. Greco, the Italian government today cancelled travel advice against all non-essential travel to Indonesia, issued to its citizens in August 2003. It has been replaced by general advice of caution in view of the current worldwide terrorist threats, “. . . which at this stage are likely to happen anywhere, regardless of the country,” said the statement.

A statement issued December 19, 2003, by the Embassy of Italy in Jakarta, stated that Italy's travel advice concerning Indonesia is revised in consideration of improved security measures taken by the Indonesian government. This advisory change removes all legal hindrances concerning travel to Indonesia by Italians. The new advice is expected to enhance recovery of travel by Italian tourists to Indonesia and further develop the already existing close relations between the two peoples, according to the statement.

“The Italian government never prohibited its citizens to travel to Bali,” said the Honorary Italian Consulate to Bali Mr. Guiseppe Pino Confessa, “but Bali was singled out in previous travel advice.” In October, Bali-based travel operators Roberto Don of Lotus Asia Tour and Umberto Cadamuro of Francorosso International visited Italy. “It was clear that major operators were unable to market Bali because of the advisory,” said Cadamuro. In November, Francorosso International and Lotus Asia in Bali launched an initiative to convey the truth on safety in Bali to Ambassador Greco. Casa Grande Chairman Robert Kelsall joined in communicating concerns to the Italian government, along with managers in PACTO Tours, Bali Hai Cruises and Sura Jaya Tours.

“Accepting our perception of the situation in Bali, the Ambassador reported to the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, and a revised warning recently was issued, considering Bali “an area that can be visited with caution,” said Cadamuro. “The advisory acknowledges efforts by the Indonesian government in securing the area, particularly in the major tourism destinations on the island.”

Casa Grande Chairman Kelsall pointed out to Ambassador Greco the numerous high profile events that recently were held successfully on Bali, including the Annual Pacific Asia Travel Association Conference in April, the ASEAN Business and Investment Summit and visits by Australian Prime Minister and US President George W. Bush in October.

Trials for all the suspects in the October 2002 Bali bombing were conducted without incident. While providing greater security on property, Bali hotels have been scrutinized by the Bali Police Department for security standards.

“It is quite clear that the Indonesian police are guarding the island,” said Consulate Confessa. Bali Police Chief I Made Mangku Pastika has drafted more police into service on the island, setting a new standard in security levels with one policeman to every 300 people, far surpassing the international standard of 1:600. Grassroots security patrols also are on hand at the village level in neighborhood watch systems..

“Bali is considered a calm place with no specific terrorism threat or problem with ethnic groups. Travel agents can now sell Bali in Italy and insure travelers without problems. People can come and enjoy Bali,” he noted.

*Casa Grande is a professional association of star-rated hotels and resorts in Bali.
Members include general managers from more than 50 hotels and resorts,
representing more than 12,000 hotel rooms and 18,000 employees in the Bali hotel sector.*

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