NEWS LESSON

Bali's Tourism Boom: Paradise for Whom?



BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. What can make a beautiful holiday destination disappointing?
2. Would you pay a visitor fee if it helped a place you loved?
3. When do visitors start changing what they came to enjoy?

2 Key words

These words are in the article. Write the letter of the meaning (A to H) in each box.

1	**frictionless**	☐	A	people who do not belong to a place or group
2	**multiplied**	☐	B	in the way that has been done for a very long time
3	**crackdown**	☐	C	to see or show the difference between two things
4	**commercial**	☐	D	large or great
5	**outsiders**	☐	E	smooth, with no problems or difficulties
6	**considerable**	☐	F	strong action by the authorities to stop something
7	**distinguish**	☐	G	connected with making money
8	**traditionally**	☐	H	became much more in number

3 Read

Read the article and underline the key words from task 2. The paragraphs are numbered.

Bali looks frictionless online: private pools, laptop cafés and a beach after work. From a neighbourhood facing rising land values, the same success looks different.

1 On social media, Bali appears almost frictionless: private pools, laptop-friendly cafés and a beach waiting after work. The same success looks more complicated from a neighbourhood where land values are rising and new businesses cater to people earning foreign salaries. Tourism creates jobs and opportunities, but it also changes who can afford to live and trade in popular areas. The real argument is not whether Bali should welcome visitors; it is how the rewards and costs are shared.

2 Bali's tourism industry remains a powerful source of employment and investment. Nearly seven million international visitors arrived in 2025, according to figures cited by Business Insider. Yet the popularity that supports local businesses can also put pressure on neighbourhoods. In some areas, expensive villas and foreign-run services have multiplied. Some residents worry about rising land values. Others point to competition from people whose income is much higher than local wages. The result is a growing argument about who gains from Bali's success and who pays the price.

3 The authorities are taking a tougher approach to foreigners who work without the right permits. In August 2026, Channel NewsAsia reported that immigration officers were paying closer attention to influencers and content creators. A tourist who accepts a hotel stay or meals in exchange for promotional posts may in effect be taking on commercial work, even if no cash changes hands. Indonesian officials reported 342 foreign nationals deported during the first half of 2026 for a range of immigration and legal offences. The number should not be mistaken for a count of influencers alone.

4 The crackdown goes beyond social media. Bali has restricted new foreign investment applications in 18 business categories, including certain cafés and motorcycle-rental businesses. Officials say the aim is to protect opportunities for local entrepreneurs. Supporters argue that outsiders should not be able to use their spending power to take over businesses that local people have traditionally operated. Others warn that unclear or inconsistently enforced regulations could discourage legitimate investment that creates jobs.

5 There is also a cultural dimension. Bali's Hindu traditions are central to daily life, not simply attractions for visitors to photograph. A small number of widely reported incidents involving disrespectful behaviour at religious sites have caused considerable anger. Nevertheless, it would be unfair to judge every foreign resident by the actions of a few. Many long-term newcomers learn local customs, support community projects and have built their lives around relationships with Balinese neighbours.

6 What Bali needs may be less a choice between welcoming foreigners and keeping them out than a clearer set of expectations. Visitors should understand the laws and traditions of the place they enter, while officials need rules that distinguish an ordinary travel video from paid commercial activity. The island's future cannot be judged solely by how attractive it looks on Instagram. A successful destination should also be a place where the people who live there can afford a home, run a business and feel respected.

Sources: Channel NewsAsia. Picture: AI illustration.

4 True, false or not given

Circle **T** (true), **F** (false) or **NG** (the article does not say).

1. A free hotel stay in return for posts could count as commercial work even without payment. T F NG
2. The restrictions will be reviewed after two years. T F NG
3. Supporters of the restrictions think local entrepreneurs should keep control of businesses they have traditionally run. T F NG
4. Every foreign resident in Bali has behaved badly. T F NG
5. Most Balinese people support the new restrictions on foreign investment. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed.

competition	**entrepreneurs**	**expectations**	**investment**	**landlords**	**loopholes**	**offences**
wages						

1. Local _____ are often much lower than the salaries paid to foreign remote workers.
2. The island needs a clearer set of _____ so that visitors know how to behave.
3. Many local _____ say that foreign spending power makes it hard to start a small business.
4. Minor immigration _____ can lead to a visitor being sent home.
5. Some people fear that strict rules will discourage foreign _____ and cost jobs.
6. Small cafés face tough _____ from foreign-run businesses with more money.

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. Many new villas _____ in popular areas in recent years. (BUILD)
2. By the time the news was published, officials _____ 342 foreign nationals. (DEPORT)
3. Before the crackdown began, many influencers _____ that promotional posts could count as work. (NOT REALISE)
4. If the rules _____ fairly, more investors would trust them. (APPLY)
5. Officials _____ closer attention to influencers in August 2026. (PAY)

7 Language focus: linking words

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. Whereas compares two things, unless means if not, and despite is followed by a noun or an -ing form.

despite	nevertheless	otherwise	provided	therefore	unless	whereas

1. _____ the benefits of tourism, some residents feel the island is changing too fast.
2. Some visitors respect local rules, _____ others ignore them.
3. Foreign visitors may be asked to leave _____ they have the correct permit.
4. The rules are unclear and inconsistently enforced; _____ , some firms have stopped investing.
5. Many influencers thought their posts were harmless. _____ , officials say some posts count as commercial work.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Give reasons for your answers.

1. What should a destination protect even if it means fewer tourists?
2. Who should have the strongest say over tourism in a place?
3. Would you choose a quieter trip if it meant giving up a famous photo?

9 Role-play: a spare room for tourists

Work in pairs. Read your card, then have the conversation. Swap roles and do it again.

Student A · the neighbour who rents out a room

You rent a spare room to tourists and earn extra money. Your neighbour is unhappy about it. Explain why it helps you and what you will do to keep things calm.

Student B · the worried neighbour

Tourists are noisy and rents on your street are rising. Explain your worries, ask questions and try to agree on some rules.

Useful phrases

I'd like to talk to you about the guests.

It's not easy for me to pay my bills.

I understand that, but the noise is a problem.

We're not trying to cause trouble.

Would you be willing to set some quiet hours?

Let's try it for a month and see.

Afterwards, tell the class: did you agree on any rules, and are they fair to both neighbours?

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

1 E · 2 H · 3 F · 4 G · 5 A · 6 D · 7 C · 8 B

4 True, false or not given

1 T · 2 NG · 3 T · 4 F · 5 NG

5 Vocabulary

1 wages · 2 expectations · 3 entrepreneurs · 4 offences · 5 investment · 6 competition

6 Verb forms

1 have been built · 2 had deported · 3 had not realised · 4 were applied · 5 paid

7 Language focus

1 Despite · 2 whereas · 3 unless · 4 therefore · 5 Nevertheless

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