

Tuesday English News Report

Hong Kong tourist arrivals jump 12pc despite Occupy uncertainty

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Arrivals hit 60.8million, thanks to more visitors from Shenzhen and South Korea

Tourist arrivals in Hong Kong increased 12 per cent to 60.8 million last year - up on an **estimate** made last February that there would be 59 million visitors and despite uncertainty created by the Occupy protests.

The total included 47.2 million from the mainland, an increase of 16 per cent from the year before, according to **preliminary** Tourism Board figures.

For the first time, South Korea replaced Japan as Hong Kong's third-biggest tourism market. The mainland and Taiwan came in first and second.

The growth in mainland figures was driven by Shenzhen permanent residents who used their Hong Kong multiple-entry permits to make more trips to the city.

Arrivals of other Asian visitors rose in the first three quarters of last year, but the increase was countered by a fall in the last quarter due to the Occupy protests.

A **sluggish** economic outlook in Europe continued to affect **long-haul** arrivals, leaving the biggest growth potential in Southeast Asia, according to the board's executive director Anthony Lau Chun-hon.

To **boost** demand for travel during the Lunar New Year holidays next month, the statutory body is sending a **delegation** of about 10 representatives from the retail, tour agency and hotel sectors to Beijing, Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, Singapore, the Philippines and Indonesia.

The marketing campaign includes **discounted** plane tickets, new tour itineraries and promotions. Three airlines will offer return tickets from Taiwan priced at HK\$500, excluding tax. The **promotion** began last week and the travel period runs until the Lunar New Year.

"We will spread the message that tear gas and the Occupy movement are over," said board chairman Peter Lam Kin-ngok.

Meanwhile, the board said Hong Kong had risen in popularity among South Koreans. For the first time ever, more South Koreans than Japanese came to Hong Kong last year.

In the first 11 months of last year, the city received more than 1.1 million South Koreans, an increase of almost 17 per cent from the year before. The country beat Japan in terms of the absolute number of visitors as well as the growth rate. Over the same period, growth in the number of tourists from Japan was just 3.5 per cent.

Thanks to the Korean cultural **boom**, South Korean television stations invest a lot in their programmes and do not hesitate to film their shows overseas - including in Hong Kong.

"Hong Kong is a hot filming **location** for their programmes," Lau said.

Popular South Korean variety programme *Running Man* was invited to Hong Kong, which saw stars go on a treasure hunt across the city. This year, the board has asked *Witch Hunt*, a variety programme about dating, to record a session here.



1. What do you think?

2. Vocabulary

Fill in the blanks in the sentences below using words from the box.

estimate	long-haul	discounted	location
preliminary	boost	promotion	
sluggish	delegation	boom	

1. A _____ is when a company advertises its products to increase public awareness and sales. Goods and services are often sold at a special price.
2. To _____ means to raise or lift something. It can also be used as a noun. It was a _____ to his confidence when the teacher praised him.
3. A _____ literally means an explosion, or the sound made by a bomb. Here the meaning is of a sudden and dramatic increase.
4. Something that comes before something else. To get into the final you have to come first or second in the _____ races.
5. _____ means coming from far away. _____ flights from Hong Kong to London take between 12 to 13 hours.
6. A _____ is a group of people who are chosen to represent others and showcase what they have to offer or negotiate.
7. Very slow-moving or inactive and lacking energy. The students were _____ in class following Sports Day.
8. The _____ of St. Louis School is very convenient for people who live in Kennedy Town, Sai Ying Pun or Pokfulam.
9. The police _____ of the number of protesters was much smaller than that of the organisers of the demonstration.
10. _____ goods are sold at a lower price. The best time to buy clothes is during the sales when many items are _____.