

"What's On over Chinese New Year"

To ensure our visitors and local residents who stay in Hong Kong to celebrate Chinese New Year (CNY) will enjoy a pleasant and memorable holiday, the Tourism Commission (TC) has worked closely with various government departments and the tourism industry to prepare for this festive period.

Based on the information and forecast gathered from various parties, we expect to receive a total of 660,000 visitors during the CNY golden ten days (February 5 - 14). Among these, about 450,000 will come from the Mainland, representing a 10% increase as compared with last year. The proportion of Mainland individual visitors will increase from 39% of total Mainland visitors in the last CNY to 55% this year. Apart from Mainland visitors, there will be numerous overseas visitors coming to Hong Kong during the golden ten days, particularly these from Japan and Korea.

The Commissioner for Tourism, Ms Eva Cheng, said, "CNY Holiday is the traditional peak travel period for Mainland tourists. Hong Kong is full of CNY festive ambience and has always been a popular destination to the Mainland tourists. Affected by the Tsunami incident in South Asia, we anticipate an increase in visitors choosing to spend their vacation in Hong Kong and some Hong Kong residents may also change their travel plans and stay in Hong Kong to celebrate the New Year. We therefore hope to provide them with comprehensive information on 'what's on' in Hong Kong."

"This year, the TC has produced 200 000 special booklets named 'What's On over Chinese New Year' to provide information to visitors and residents about the wide range of exciting events and activities taking place in Hong Kong. These include traditional festivities, arts and culture, sports, nature appreciation and more. The highlights will definitely be the International Chinese New Year Night Parade on February 9 and the Chinese New Year Fireworks Display on February 10. 'A Symphony of Lights' will be enhanced with newly designed rooftop pyrotechnic displays from February 11 to 15. There will also be a number of district celebration events and a recommended Impressionism exhibition staged by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department showcasing treasures from the National Collection of France.

We hope our residents will make good use of the booklet and help promote hospitality by recommending to their visiting friends and relatives the great variety of programmes," Ms Cheng continued.

The bilingual booklets will be distributed free of charge from February 5 (Saturday) at key boundary control points, Visitors and Information Service Centres of the Hong Kong Tourism Board, major MTR and KCR stations, 18 District Offices, venues managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, country parks managed by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department as well as the Ocean Park.

Ms Cheng said, "We believe the atmosphere in Hong Kong will be more festive and delightful this year, thereby attracting more visitors and business opportunities for every industry. Apart from the various celebration events and activities, a number of shops and dining outlets located in the tourist districts will also maximise the business opportunities and strengthen their service including extended business or service hours during the CNY. According to the survey conducted by the Hong Kong Retail Management Association, 70% of its members will remain open during the CNY and many of their outlets located in the tourist districts will continue to operate during the period. Among these, many are popular shops selling cosmetics, AV product, and fashion chain-stores etc. The Quality Tourism Services Association has also urged their members to remain business-as-usual during the CNY. We hope the colourful and festive ambience in Hong Kong will reinforce our status as a popular destination to celebrate the Chinese New Year."

"To ensure smooth visitors' flow, the Government departments will continue to adopt the series of measures that have been proven effective in the previous peak periods. The departments are well prepared and will flexibly deploy resources according to the situation. Our experience in the previous Golden Weeks has well demonstrated our handling capability. We have also maintained close liaison with the Guangdong Provincial Tourism Administration to understand more about the visitors flow." Ms Cheng added.

"To enjoy a pleasant and safe journey, I would suggest our visitors as well as our local residents who are travelling abroad to make appropriate arrangements for hotel accommodation and transportation before departure,

and purchase suitable travel insurance according to their own needs."

The measures adopted by government departments for the CNY Golden Week cover the following areas -

- (1) Arrangements for immigration clearance at Boundary Control Points;
- (2) Arrangement of facilities;
- (3) Information dissemination;
- (4) Visitors' information service;
- (5) Consumer protection;
- (6) Protection of visitors' health
- (7) Coordination with Guangdong Province

Details of the measures for the CNY Golden Week are at Annex 1. List of distribution outlets for the "What's On over Chinese New Year" is at Annex 2.

Tourism Commission

End/ Friday, February 4, 2005

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