

Round-up on tourist arrivals during the 10-day Golden Week

The Tourism Commission, in concluding the Labour Day Golden Week today (May 9), said that 415,466 Mainland visitors arrived during the 10-day Golden Week period (from April 29 to May 8). This represents an increase of 6% as compared with the same Golden Week last year. To conclude, although we are facing competition for Mainland visitors brought about by other destinations, and there was an increasing proportion of Mainland visitors coming to Hong Kong through the Individual Visit Scheme (IVS) who may choose not to visit Hong Kong during the peak seasons, our appeal to Mainland visitors have been maintained in this Labour Day Golden Week.

A spokesman of the Tourism Commission said that Hong Kong has always been a popular destination for Mainland visitors. As "IVS" is becoming more popular and has accounted for about half of the total Mainland visitors, and the mode of travel of Mainland visitors becomes more mature, it is expected that the "Golden Week effect" will diminish gradually. Taking the visitors from Guangdong province as an example, it is very convenient for them to travel to Hong Kong; and hence they would prefer visiting Hong Kong during normal weekends so as to avoid the crowd and the surcharges for peak seasons. In the preceding weekend of this Golden Week (May 5 to 7), the daily arrivals from Mainland have increased by 19% on average. During March and the first two weeks of April, when there were not any major holidays, 1.12 million and 0.54 million Mainland visitors were recorded, representing an increase of about 20% and 15% respectively as compared with the same period last year.

According to the Hong Kong Hotels Association, the average hotel rate has increased by 15% during the Golden Week and the average occupancy rate was around 85%.

"The adjustment of hotel rate in the peak seasons has reflected the supply and demand of the market. The hotel industry and travel agents should maintain close liaison. The most important thing is to work together to maintain smooth operation of the market mechanism," the spokesman said.

"Mainland visitors have all along been generating economic benefits to the tourism related industries including retail, catering and entertainment sectors," the spokesman continued.

"According to the observations of the Hong Kong Retail Management Association, the retail market has been good in general and the traffic flow in large shopping malls has increased during the last Golden Week," the spokesman added.

The spokesman of the Tourism Commission said that as Mainland visitors become more familiar with Hong Kong and visit Hong Kong more frequently, they would spend more wisely on value-for-money products and services. We should not focus only on the short-term benefits of the Golden Week but should continue to make every effort to upgrade our service quality with a view to strengthening our competitive edge on long-term basis and attracting visitors to come again.

Ends/Tuesday, May 9, 2006