

SRI LANKA WELCOMED 26% MORE TOURISTS IN 2013



Sri Lanka has experienced a rise in the number of tourist arrivals last year reaching a record of 1.27 million. This surpassed the figure predicted by the government by 0.07 million tourist arrivals.

According to the Sri Lankan tourism board, these figures reflect a 26% rise. The good news is that the figures are expected to rise with more tourists estimated to arrive this year.

By November 2013, over 1,016,228 million tourists had visited the country with an additional 200,000 arriving late in December. The Sri Lankan tourism board has done a validation of all the figures for all the months of the year 2013. **This indicates that the total number of tourists received in 2013 was 1,274,593.** This is a 26.7% rise from the arrivals that were recorded in the previous year.

January 2013 arrivals were 110,543, indicating a 28.7% increase. The February arrivals shot to 113,968, an equivalent of a 36.4% rise from the previous February.

Without a doubt, the tourism industry is a very significant part of the Sri Lankan economy. Millions of its citizens have been employed through the industry. According to the central bank of Sri Lanka, the total earnings from tourism arrivals shot up by 4.9% representing \$129.4 million in November. **The total year on year gains from the industry stood at \$1.4 billion.**

Having gone through years of war, it seems that Sri Lanka has now surfaced to be an economic powerhouse in Asia. It now boasts of one of the fastest growing economies in the world.

Statistics released by the World Tourism Organization clearly indicate that tourism is a big player in the global gross domestic product, accounting for more than 10%. After the 26 years of civil war in the country, its tourism has been growing exponentially since 2009.

The Sri Lankan government now anticipates 1.5 million arrivals this year. This number of arrivals is set to earn the economy of this country approximately \$1.8 billion. The country targets a record 2.5 million arrivals by the year 2016 as long as there are no deterrent factors that may arise.

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