

KENYA'S TOURIST ARRIVALS DECREASED BY 38%



Kenya's National Bureau of Statistics reported that the country experienced a 38% fall in the number of tourists in the first two months of the current year.

Inbound tourist arrivals in January and February, through Jomo Kenyatta as well as Moi, two of Kenya's prominent international airports, were lower by 38 percent. During this two month period, the country was engaged in the preparations for the general elections which were held on March 4. The elections were widely expected to bring about a transformation in the East African country. President Uhuru Kenyatta was declared victorious after a peaceful election process.

February was the worst month for tourism with a dip of over 35 percent in tourist arrivals as compared to January. During this month the amount of tourists flowing through the Jomo Kenyatta Airport decreased by 50 percent.

Jomo Kenyatta, which is Kenya's largest airport, saw arrivals of just 48,970 tourists as compared to 85,538 arrivals in the preceding month. During the same period MIA recorded 24,031 arrivals which was a reduction from the 26,446 arrivals in January.

The arrivals in January were already marginally lower than the arrivals in the peak season of December. This period experienced mixed trends as the arrivals in Jomo Kenyatta Dropped even as the arrivals in Moi International Airport (MIA) experienced an increase.

Tourist arrivals in Jomo Kenyatta and MIA were 85,538 and 26,446 respectively for January as against 92,365 and 23,290 during the month of December. The increase in the tourist arrivals at MIA is attributed to its proximity to the coastal town Mombasa, which is a tourist attraction with its pristine, beautiful beaches.

The departures from Kenya's Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA) also showed a declining trend in February matching the declining trend in arrivals in January. People leaving through the airport declined from 184,171 in January to 178,220 in February. Likewise, people arriving decreased from 183,819 to 178,202 during the same month.

A similar trend was observed in the month of January as compared to the month of December. While there was a marginal reduction in departures from 184,194 in December to 184,171 in January, the arrivals declined from 183,972 in December to 183,819 in January.

Kenya is a major destination for tourists from Europe which made them the majority of visitors during the two months. Among all the tourists visiting Kenya, 41,605 people in January and 41,137 in December were from Europe showing a marginal increase in January as compared to December. The month of February, however saw a decline in visitors from Europe including Germany, France, Britain, Switzerland and Italy, to 37,540.

Africa and Asia were next in number with 37,496 and 30,972 visitors from these continents

respectively travelling to Kenya in February. This was marginally lower than the 38,563 African tourists and 31,486 Asian tourists that visited Kenya in January. **Asian tourists mostly travelled from Dubai, Bombay, Muscat and Jedah.** Over 50 percent of the Asian tourists visiting Kenya travelled via Dubai. They numbered 18,738 in January and 19,090 in February.

Similarly the Asian tourists preferred to travel through Dubai on their return journey accounting for 18,756 out of 30,997 Asians in January and 19,427 out of 31,764 Asians leaving Kenya. It is estimated that the tourists preferred the Dubai route because of the excellent trade ties between Kenya and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Kenya imports goods mainly through UAE with imports in February aggregating \$256 million. This was at a time when there was a fall in Kenya's international trade.

In dollar terms the volume of trade declined from a January figure of \$2.1 billion to \$1.9 billion in February. During the two months exports declined by 0.9 percent and imports by 11 percent. Food and beverages topped the export categories with a share of 42.33 percent.

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