

SRI LANKA: CHINESE ARRIVALS HELP TOURISM EARNINGS GROW 6.6%



According to the official data that the Central Bank released, Sri Lanka started the year with a tourism earnings growth of 6.6%, posting \$248.7 million in January of 2015, which is up from \$233.3 million in January 2014. This is helped by a 6.6% growth rate in tourist arrivals for the same period, from 146,575 in January of 2014 to 156,246 arrivals in 2015.

The top five tourist arrival sources, which accounted for 43.3% of total arrivals, were Britain, Germany, Russia, China, and India. **China became Sri Lanka's second largest tourist source, surpassing Britain by growing 85% compared to the previous year.**

Chinese arrivals expanded to 39,160 last year, up from 21,098 in 2014, which demonstrates a rise of 85.6%. According to the SLTDB's latest data, this surpasses arrivals from Britain, which come in at 28,622.

For February of 2015, 165,541 tourist arrivals were recorded overall, which compares to the number for February of 2014, 141,878 total arrivals. According to the SLTDB, 321,787 tourists visited Sri Lanka in this year's first two months, which demonstrates a raise of 11.6% when juxtaposed with the same two-month period in 2014.

Sri Lanka's Chinese arrivals began the New Year with significant growth, rising by 8.9% in the month of January. For 2015's first month, Chinese arrivals experienced growth from January 2014's rate of 10,779 all the way to 11,735 Chinese tourist arrivals.

Sri Lanka, the small island located in the Indian Ocean, has experienced a rapid rise in Chinese tourists during the last two years, with 2014 finishing at a record high. In the year 2013, a mere 54,288 tourists from China arrived in Sri Lanka, but numbers shot up to a whopping 128,166 arrivals by 2014's end, demonstrating a startling growth of 136.1%.

The only country to boast higher visitor numbers than China was India, but China still possesses the largest growth rate out of any country on the globe. Since a thirty-year war ended in 2009, **Sri Lanka's tourism has boomed, jumping above 1.5 million arrivals last year and bringing in roughly \$1.7 billion.**

Sri Lanka aims to draw in 2.5 million tourist arrivals by next year, supported by the quickly-growing number of Chinese arrivals.

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