

REGIONAL TOURISM IN ASIA PACIFIC EXPECTED TO INCREASE



The Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) has predicted that regional tourism in Pacific Asia will continue on an upwards trend through to the year 2020. While releasing its current 5-year travel forecast, the association predicted that the number of visitors arriving in the region's destinations will exceed the 550 million record for the year 2015 in 2016, and continue setting new records each year up to an approximate 650 million visitors in 2020.

According to PATA, a huge percentage of the foreign arrivals will be expected in the core Asia region, which will account for an approximately 482 million visitors in 2020, up from an expected 405.57 million visitors in 2016.

While releasing its 5-year visitor forecast for the years 2016 to 2020, PATA also published a Quarterly Tourism Monitor (QTM) for all the major destinations in the region. The QTM made several findings, top of the list being that **there was a 4.5% year-on-year increase in international visitor arrivals to 32 Asia Pacific destinations this year when compared to last year.**

The South Asia experienced a 5.3% year-on-year growth this year, which can be attributed to the impressive increase that was experienced in Sri Lankan tourism - their international visitor arrivals grew by at least 14.9% this year.

However, the Northeast Asia regional tourism experienced only a slight growth of 2.5%. The main reason for this minimal increase was attributed to the significant decline (8%) that was recorded in Hong Kong SAR in the first quarter of 2016. The decline was mainly due to a drop of 11.9% in the visitors arriving from China, which is the region's main tourism market. Despite the decline in the number of visitors arriving in Hong Kong SAR from China, Japan experienced a surge of 77.9% in the foreign visitors arriving from China.

Travel destinations in Southeast Asia posted positive results, with Vietnam and Myanmar leading the regional tourism with a year-on-year growth of 18.4% and 16.9% increase respectively. The great results experienced in Vietnam were attributed to the significant rise (24.8%) in the volume of visitors from Northeast Asia - the country's main tourism market - in the last quarter of 2015.

The Oceania destinations in the Pacific region also reported a significant growth of 10%, which was due to an increase in the arrivals from Northeast Asia. However, Palau posted a significant decline of 12% in the number of international arrivals. This was due to a decline in the visitors arriving from Northeast Asia, which was caused by the occurrence of the Typhoon Bopha in the last quarter of 2015.

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