

HKSARG warmly welcomes expansion of IVS to Taiyuan, Hohhot, Harbin, Lhasa, Lanzhou, Xining, Yinchuan and Urumqi

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government (HKSARG) warmly welcomed and expressed sincere gratitude to the Central Government for further enhancing the Individual Visit Scheme (IVS) to cover Taiyuan in Shanxi Province, Hohhot in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, Harbin in Heilongjiang Province, Lhasa in Tibet Autonomous Region, Lanzhou in Gansu Province, Xining in Qinghai Province, Yinchuan in Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region and Urumqi in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, in response to the HKSARG's proposal to further expand the IVS to let residents of the eight cities to explore Hong Kong's unique appeals as a tourism destination more flexibly and conveniently. Following the expansion of the IVS to Xi'an in Shaanxi Province and Qingdao in Shandong Province starting from March 6, the IVS will cover 59 cities, including all provincial capitals in our country." a Government spokesman said today (May 11).

"I wish to express my gratitude towards the Central Government's care for Hong Kong and full wing support to Hong Kong's advancement from stability to prosperity. Subsequent to the various measures rolled out this year for supporting and benefitting Hong Kong, the Central Government responded positively again to the HKSARG's proposal to extend the IVS to cover eight cities, making the applicable cities of IVS to 59 and covering all provincial capital cities. This is a measure with significant importance as this is not only boosting the tourism industry and the economic development of Hong Kong in general, but also facilitating the people-to-people bonds between the Mainland and Hong Kong," the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, said.

"These eight cities are all provincial capital cities with large population, significant economic growth and high spending power. Further expanding the IVS will boost the economic activities of tourism, retail, catering, hotel and other related industries, bringing in huge benefits while promoting the two-way visits between Hong Kong and different provincial capital cities. We look forward to seeing the closer communication of the people between Hong Kong and the eight cities following the enhancement of IVS." Mr Lee said.

The Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, said, "The Central Government has all along been providing staunch support towards Hong Kong's economy and tourism development. IVS visitors are a major driving force for the development of the tourism-related industries in Hong Kong, amongst others. Further enhancement of the IVS is conducive to the economic development of Hong Kong, benefitting various tourism-related industries such as retail, catering, hotel and accommodation. Various Government departments will step up co-ordination and maintain liaison with relevant organisations and the travel trade to establish and enhance the capacity of direct flights with the eight cities, and at the same time ensure smooth operation of

boundary control points, tourist and accommodation facilities as well as public transportation networks to welcome visitors. The Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) will immediately step up promotion work in each city and invite representatives from the trade in relevant cities to come to Hong Kong to participate in promotion activities, co-operating with the travel trade to explore relevant source markets. Hong Kong's capacity to receive visitors has been enhanced in the past few years. The Government is confident in providing more visitors from different source markets with quality travel experiences."

Mr Yeung said that the recovery of Hong Kong's tourism industry was strong in the past year. However, in view of the evolvement of visitors' travel patterns, the travel trade and relevant industries in the HKSAR have to actively adapt to changes, making use of Hong Kong's characteristics to provide visitors with more novel and diversified travel experiences, with high quality service to make them feel at home. The HKSARG will continue to consolidate various sectors in the community to promote warm hospitality through developing novel travel itineraries and products to upgrade the quality of service continuously for achieving "Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong" to polish Hong Kong's brand as "the best tourism destination".

He continued to say that with the enhancement of the IVS, there would be more frequent contacts between Hong Kong and residents of eight cities which would strengthen people-to-people bonds. Hong Kong has a unique background with cultural integration and rich tourism resources, including theme parks, country parks, natural ecology, hiking trails, history and heritage, beautiful harbour, stunning high view, Eastern and Western cuisines, and uncountable traditional festivals and pop culture activities, to let visitors experience rich and wonderful metropolitan glamour throughout different periods over the year. Just between the period from May to June, Hong Kong has a series of mega events, from Cheung Chau Bun Festival, Celebration Carnival for Buddha's Birthday, French May, Chinese Culture Festival and Hong Kong International Dragon Boat Races, etc, as well as large-scale concerts to be held at the Central Harbourfront Event Space. We look forward to welcoming more visitors from different cities to come to explore Hong Kong in depth.

To introduce Hong Kong's tourist attractions and activities to visitors, the HKTB has consolidated a series of itinerary guides and provided information on different activities on its website [DiscoverHongKong.com](https://www.discoverhongkong.com) to facilitate visitors to plan for their itineraries in Hong Kong.

Under the IVS, which was implemented on July 28, 2003, in accordance with the main document of the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement, eligible residents of the designated Mainland cities can apply for an endorsement to visit Hong Kong in their individual capacity. The IVS was first introduced in four Guangdong cities (namely Dongguan, Zhongshan, Jiangmen, Foshan) and the number of eligible cities was gradually increased in the following years to a total of 51 Mainland cities in March 2024. With the expansion of the IVS to cover Taiyuan, Hohhot, Harbin, Lhasa, Lanzhou, Xining, Yinchuan and Urumqi starting from May 27, 2024, designated Mainland cities eligible for the IVS will be increased to 59.