

## **New records in overseas tourists arrivals**

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(Xinhua) The number of overseas tourists arriving in the TAR grew by 136 percent in 2007, said Wang Songping, deputy head of the TAR tourism bureau. The region received 365,000 foreign visitors, or 210,500 more than 2006, and they reportedly brought in revenue of US\$135.3 million, (UK£68.8m; EUR€91.4) up 122 percent year-on-year. Japan replaced the United States as the largest source of overseas tourists to Tibet, and accounted for 78,000 visitors, 5.2 times the figure of 2006, Wang said. As a whole, the TAR hosted a record high of more than 4 million tourists both inland and overseas tourists, which represents an annual growth of 60.4 percent. The region's revenue from tourism surged 75.1 percent year-on-year to 4.85 billion Yuan (US\$668m; UK£340m; EUR€451.4m). Tourism revenue accounted for 14.2 percent of the gross domestic product in Tibet last year, 4.6 percentage points higher than the previous year. However, official statistics do not reflect which part of this revenue actually benefits Tibetan enterprises and individuals. For 2008, the number of visitors to the TAR is expected to hit 5 million, or 25 percent more than 2007, and tourism revenue is officially predicted to reach 6 billion Yuan (UK£420m; US\$826m; EUR€558m), up 24 percent. Local authorities attributed the tourism boom to overseas promotional drives, the opening of the Golmud-Lhasa railway and of the third civilian airport in Nyingtri (Chin: Lingzhi).

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