

March 4, 2023

The Editor  
The Wall Street Journal

Dear Editor,

Your editorial “About Those Free Tickets to Hong Kong” (March 3) is misleading and blatantly ignores the actual situation of Hong Kong.

With the COVID-19 epidemic coming under control and rapid resumption of normal travel, Hong Kong is once again seamlessly connected to Mainland China and the rest of the world. The number of overseas visitor arrivals in January 2023 increased by about 168 times compared with January 2022, and was up by about 50% compared with December 2022.

The HKSAR Government launched the “Hello Hong Kong” Campaign in February 2023, welcoming visitors to Hong Kong to experience our great wine and dine scenes as well as outdoor activities, to do business, to organise and join events, or simply to enjoy the hustle and bustle of Asia’s world city. In support of the “Hello Hong Kong” Campaign, the Airport Authority Hong Kong announced the same month that it would give away around 500 000 air tickets via three local airlines to travellers in major passenger markets, with a view to stimulating the recovery of the aviation and tourism industries. The giveaway was launched in March 2023, with Southeast Asia as a start, followed by Mainland China, Northeast Asia and other markets, over a period of about six months. The free tickets in various source markets were snapped up within hours.

Such overwhelming response and the growth in arrival statistics are clear evidence that Hong Kong has been much missed, and is treasured and loved by friends around the world, and they are solid proof that the skewed remarks in your editorial are unfounded.

Hong Kong is not just offering free air tickets. To welcome tourists and to celebrate Hong Kong’s return to the global centre stage, we are hosting a year-round calendar of more than 250 art, cultural, business and sports events and festivals throughout 2023 featuring, among other things, prestigious global art fairs and international idols and the event list is growing; we have secured more than 100 MICE events and, again, the event list is growing; and we are offering hospitality treats under the banner of “Hong Kong Goodies”. In addition, in the past few years, we

renewed our tourism assets and offerings and introduced new ones. We welcome business travellers and tourists with open arms for them to see for themselves the real situation in Hong Kong.

Your editorial's remarks about the Hong Kong National Security Law are groundless and misleading. The implementation of the law has enabled the livelihood and economic activities of the Hong Kong community at large to resume as normal and the business environment to be restored. The law clearly stipulates four categories of offences that endanger national security. So long as people, regardless of whether they are Hong Kong residents, tourists or investors, strictly observe the laws in Hong Kong, they will not unwittingly violate the law. We also strongly object to your editorial's willful ignorance of the fact that Hong Kong continues to enjoy freedom of speech and artistic expression and creation, which is well protected by the laws of Hong Kong.

The HKSAR Government will continue to uphold the rule of law steadfastly and safeguard national security lawfully and dutifully.

Seeing is believing. We trust that all fair-minded people, be they tourists or investors, from around the world would make objective judgements and rational decisions based on what Hong Kong is, rather than what Hong Kong is misleadingly perceived to be by some international media. As always, we welcome visitors from around the world to experience in person the real Hong Kong where tremendous opportunities and experiences await.

Yours sincerely,

Kevin Yeung  
Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism  
The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region