

Hong Kong to giveaway 500,000 free flight tickets

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Dhaka: Hong Kong plans to offer 500,000 free tickets to bring tourists back to the international hub. Cathay Pacific, HK Express, and Hong Kong Airlines will all be handing out the tickets in phases, starting with travellers from Southeast Asia on March 1.

During the pandemic, Hong Kong's government had been buying tickets to support domestic airlines. In 2020, the Hong Kong Airport Authority purchased half a million air tickets from four domestic airlines (including now shuttered Cathay Dragon) at a cost of HKD 2 billion (USD 255m).

The purpose was to support the territory's carriers without more bailouts or loans that would increase debt. Now, after three years, these tickets will finally make it to potential visitors.

As a part of its 'Hello Hong Kong' campaign to bring back locked-out tourists,

the government will distribute the tickets through the three airline partners: Cathay Pacific, HK Express, and Hong Kong Airlines.

The first phase kicks off on March 1 and will target travellers in Southeast Asian countries, followed by mainland China in April, and Northeast Asia and other long-haul markets from May onward.

The giveaway will launch soon, and Cathay is the first airline to open up its page for registrations. 'World of Winners' is the name of the promotion, and those interested will need to register with the airline and then keep an eye out for when the selection process begins.

While Hong Kong began relaxing its Covid restrictions in mid-2022, mainland China only did so on January 8, lifting all quarantine requirements.

Now, as the country finally reopens to international traffic, it is hoping that it can bring back millions of yearly visitors as well.

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