

《今年春运于下月8日开始》

中国农历新年接近，春运预计于1月8日开始，为期40天，旅客运量至少将达到32亿。春节从2012年1月23日开始，国定假日为1月22日到28日，在此期间，中国人将赶回家团聚。

BEIJING - As the Chinese Lunar New Year draws closer, the world's largest annual human migration is expected to begin on Jan 8, with at least 3.2 billion journeys expected over a 40-day period.

Spring Festival starts on Jan 23 in 2012, with the public holiday running from Jan 22 to 28. Chinese people tend to return home for family unions during this period.

This travel peak is expected to put the country's transport system through a harsh test, as total traffic between Jan 8 and Feb 16 is set to grow by 9.1 percent on the 2.9 billion trips taken in 2011.

Most people will travel by road, with some 2.84 billion trips expected during the annual "spring rush", up 9.5 percent on this year, the National Development and Reform Commission said on Thursday.

about 235 million trips will also be made on trains, up 6.1 percent, despite the shadow cast by the bullet train crash in July that killed 40 people.

In addition, 34.88 million trips will be made by air, up 7 percent, while an estimated 43.50 million people will travel by boat.

Passengers will likely face the usual struggle to get their hands on tickets, particularly at railway stations, where long lines are expected.

To ease congestion, the Ministry of Railways said all tickets will be available online by the end of this year.

Feng Xiao, 23, a civil servant in Beijing, said she will try to buy a bullet train ticket to her hometown in Shandong province online instead of lining up for hours at a station.

"I tried the online ticketing system earlier this year and it was convenient," she said.

However, she conceded that the Web service is still unlikely to solve the massive demand for tickets.

"If there are not enough train services during the spring rush, it will still be difficult to get a ticket, even with the online system. I will have to prepare myself for hours of clicking to refresh a website," Feng added.

Others said they are worried about the journey itself, which judging by experience can be a nightmare.

Ouyang Yuanhua, 23, a graduate student at Fudan University in Shanghai, said she has hated this "horrible" Spring Festival rush since her undergraduate years.

"There are so many people in the crowded carriages that sometimes my feet don't touch the floor," said Ouyang, who is from Ji'an in Jiangxi province.

"If a high-speed train goes to my hometown in the future, the annual rush will be less torturous" she said.

