

In Case You Missed

Khmer Rouge Bastion
A Tourist Site

Cambodia's government said on Friday it was designating the final Khmer Rouge rebel stronghold a site for international and domestic tourists.

The Cabinet approved a sub-decree to "preserve and develop" Anlong Veng in northern Cambodia, the final center for the Khmer Rouge before the movement was defeated in 1998, a statement by the government said, Reuters wrote.

Anlong Veng will be made a "historic tourism site for national and international guests to visit and understand the last political leadership of the genocidal regime".

Among the anticipated attractions is the spot where late Khmer Rouge Leader Pol Pot was unceremoniously cremated under a pile of garbage and rubber tires in 1998, after he was purged from the movement.

Other attractions are a munitions warehouse, homes belonging to former Khmer Rouge cadres, and the fenced-off area where Pol Pot spent his last months under house arrest.

Officials have been planning since 2000 to transform Anlong Veng into a showcase of the communist regime's final days. The tourism ministry has picked out some three dozen sites of interest in the isolated hilly area.

Prime Minister Hun Sen also asked Cabinet officials to compile a guidebook to the area and his "win-win policy" to defeat the Khmer Rouge, the statement said.

Tourism is one of the only sources of foreign exchange for impoverished Cambodia, which is recovering from nearly three decades of conflict that ended in 1998.

The kingdom aims to lure three million tourists annually by next year, and in 2009 attracted more than two million foreign visitors.

Spain Uses Top Chef
To Revive Tourism

Spain launched a new campaign featuring famed chef Ferran Adria to revive its crisis-battered tourism industry.

Tourism authorities launched their "I need Spain" campaign which they hope will be seen by 400 million people in 40 countries, AFP reported.

"The essence of the campaign is the Spanish lifestyle, which attracts more than 50 million tourists a year," the tourism ministry said in a statement.



The ministry said the campaign is particularly aimed at markets that have traditionally been weak, such as China, India and the Middle East.

The ministry announced Adria, owner of renowned restaurant elBulli as a "tourism ambassador".

Spain last year suffered an 8.7-percent drop in foreign tourists due to the global slowdown, its second straight year of falling visitor numbers.

In 2008, Spain dropped from second to third among the world's most visited countries, behind top ranked France and the United States.

Spain is feeling the pinch from the drop in the pound sterling to near parity with the euro which has made it more expensive for British holidaymakers. The country has also suffered from increased competition in recent years from cheaper sunshine destinations in the Eastern Mediterranean like Turkey and Egypt.

Britain's Cambridge Univ.
Becomes Hotel

The University of Cambridge is opening the doors of its buildings for tourists who want to stay the night, the prestigious British institution said.

Visitors can stay in the colleges overnight while the students are away on holidays, with the buildings that housed famous figures such as Charles Darwin, Isaac Newton and William Wordsworth being opened to the public, Daily Mail wrote.

"Thousands of visitors come to Cambridge each year, attracted by the historical architecture and unique atmosphere of the colleges," said Conference Cambridge manager Kelly Vickers.

"In the past, requests for staying in the colleges have mainly come from groups but we have noticed a significant increase in enquiries from individuals. Now everyone can experience it first hand by booking into one of our participating venues offering bed and breakfast in the university vacations."

Rooms cost between 41 and 100 pounds (62 and 151 dollars).

Iran at ITB



Iranians will participate in the ITB Tourism Exhibition, slated for March 10-14 in Berlin, with the finest tourism packages to present a good image of the country.

Announcing the above, the head of Publicity and Tourism Exhibition Headquarters, Mohammad Hossein Barzin, told CHTN that these packages will introduce investment opportunities in Iran's free trade zones at the event.

"Iran's pavilion covers an area of 290 meters and its decoration is inspired by the ancient pillars of Nations Gateway of Persepolis and Iranian mosques such as Yazd Grand Mosque," he said.

> Iranian Participation

Iranian tourism agencies, hotels and other related entities are taking part in the event.

"The free trade zones of Qeshm, Kish and Arvandroud are among Iranian participants," he said.

Pointing to the important role of such international exhibitions in boosting the arrival of tourists, Barzin said that according to statistics released by the immigration police, 2.6 million tourists visited Iran during the last 11 months of the current Iranian year (ending March 20).

He added that the amount shows a 9.4-percent increase compared with the corresponding figure of last year.

"We hope participation in such exhibitions can help boost Iran's tourism ties with other countries and increase the number of tourists visiting Iran every year," he said.

Barzin noted that most countries' tourism ministers will attend the event, adding that it will receive comprehensive news coverage.

"Germany is one of the most important tourism targets for Iran," Barzin said, noting that the number of German tourists selecting Iran as their next destination will increase after this event.

Describing ITB as a bourse index, Barzin said ITB is the biggest and most important fair in the field of tourism with participants ranging from tour operators to hoteliers as well as medical centers and journalists.

"The effect of global economic recession on tourism and the change in travel patterns will be discussed in the event," he said, noting that more than 200 experts will deliver speeches about different issues influencing tourism, including cultural, economic and political ones.

> 180 Countries

More than 180 countries are participating in the event. ITB is among pioneers in promoting tourism in the world with more than 180,000 visitors.

It is considered the world's largest tourism market during which new achievements related to tourism is displayed. It also provides unique opportunities for those involved in the industry.

Unbridled Grazing Threatens Northern Forests

Northern forests are facing destruction due to the unbridled grazing of livestock, said managing director of Natural Reserves Directorate of the Department of Environment (DoE), Amir Abdous.

The official pointed out that since between 0.5-1 meter of leaf mold should cover the soil of forests, the unbridled cattle grazing will destroy this surface, IRNA wrote.

The presence of leaf mold is a sign that

the forests are absorbing rainwater, which also prevents the occurrence of flood.

"Unfortunately, we have witnessed floods in northern Iran in recent years due to the destruction of upper soil layers," he said.

Abdous noted that livestock grazing in northern forests has decreased leaf mold and caused soil erosion, preventing water absorption and causing floods.

"Logging is another threat facing the forests," he said.

The official noted that Forests, Rangelands and Watershed Organization has adopted new measures to prevent forest destruction and exploitation.

"Northern forests are part of Hirkani forests and should be preserved," he said, stressing that forests should not be exploited for logging.

According to Abdous, removal of cattle from the forests is one of the preventive measures.

Handicraft Promotion
Underway

Some 56,000 individuals have been trained in producing handicrafts across the country.

Announcing this, the deputy head of Traditional Arts and Handicrafts Department, Tahmineh Daniali, told CHTN that they were trained during the first nine month of the current Iranian year (started March 21, 2009).

The provincial departments of handicrafts and traditional arts started to teach those interested in handicrafts since past two years in cooperation with the private sector.

"Individuals have the opportunity to learn different kinds of handicrafts in provincial centers," she said.

"All stages of education will be supervised by the department's deputy and the graduates of these centers will receive certificates."

A complete set of information has been gathered about the active masters of handicrafts.

Daniali noted that 1,934 instructors taught different types of handicrafts in the current Iranian year.

"23,274 jobs were created for handicraft artists in the current Iranian year," she said, adding that 24,934 permits were also issued during this period for setting up handicraft workshops nationwide.

Meanwhile Iranian handicrafts will be displayed in Iranian embassies in 40 countries.

The embassies will introduce and boost the sale of handicrafts.

The countries were selected after holding different sessions in cooperation with Islamic Culture and Relations Organization.

Iran has cultural attaché offices in 60 countries, which have been selected in view of their geographical, cultural and social conditions.

The items displayed at the embassies have some commonality with conditions in the target country.

Call for UNESCO's Registration
Of Tabriz Bazaar

An official called for the registration of Tabriz Bazaar on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

Visiting Tabriz along with 300 tour guides, Arash Nour-Aqaei, secretary of Tehran Tour Leaders Association, said that given the worth of Tabriz Bazaar as the largest covered structure of the world, it should be globally registered, IRNA reported.

"More coordination could be created among tour leaders by holding the annual ceremony to commemorate tour leaders in different provinces," he said.

The official noted that the acquaintance of tour leaders with the attractions of various provinces can help introduce the country's tourism potentials.

"It can also help make tourists more familiar with sightseeing spots," he added.

The center of Tabriz reminds visitors that it is a commercial city: one cannot miss its very large and 15th-century covered bazaar. It is still a great place for witnessing its architectural splendors.

The presence of numerous caravansaries, mosques and schools add to its beauty and glory.

Precise information on the history and origin of the bazaar is not available. However, historical buildings such as Jame' Mosque, Talebieh School and Sadeqieh School indicate that the complex is one of the oldest structures of the city.

The present structure of bazaar dates back to the closing years of Zand Dynasty (1750-79 AD).

The complex has high brick domes and arches. It includes several small bazaars, each allotted to a specific guild and craft.

Carpet making is the main trade, but Tabriz is also renowned for its silverware and jewelry.

The Spice Bazaar, one of the most impressive ones in Iran, is an excellent place for picking up herbs and spices.

