

AZERBAIJAN CUTTING PRICES TO ATTRACT MORE TOURISTS



Currently, the Azerbaijan government is considering a number of measures to boost local tourism. Cutting the airfare and hotel prices, as well as facilitating the visa procedure and constructing budget hotels – these are the main methods considered.

Vugar Shikhammadav, from the tourism ministry, informed that the ministry is on the way to execute plans according to the instructions given by the president Ilham Aliyev in the cabinet meeting.

Besides, the ministry of Economy and Culture and Tourism are **also planning for a joint package to standardize the pricing strategy of hotels**. The foreign ministry departments are also preparing proposals for the facilitation of the visa procedure.

Regarding the visa procedure, the president has suggested the concerned to improve e-visa procurement system. The ministry is also preparing proposals for the improvement of the e-visa structure, and also to reduce the time period of reviewing visa application.

Nahid Bagirov, tourism association head, has emphasized the importance of cutting the airfare. He said that now is the time for the reduction of the cost in the air tickets on all routes. He also added travelers from Turkey, Russia and Europe are those expected to come in greater numbers since they prefer favorable prices of air tickets.

Moreover, currently Azerbaijan has 530 hotels that can accommodate 35,000 tourists. The budget accommodation sector however lacks sufficient number of facilities. Muzaffar Agakerimov, Tourism Association Adviser, suggested building hotels of three and two stars category so that more tourists get accommodation. He also highlighted the construction of the budget hotels to attract low-income travelers of neighboring countries.

He also said that the price of the hotels needs to be comparable to the hotels of the neighboring countries like Iran and Turkey and the service standards should reflect the price.

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