

CRUISE SHIPS TO BOOST THAI TOURISM SECTOR



Thai authorities are looking to cruise ships to help boost the recovery of the tourism sector, which will also be boosted by a new plan to collaborate with Netflix on the launch of a creative travel guide to attractive places featured in movies, a government spokesman announced.

According to Anucha Burapachaisri, deputy secretary general to the prime minister, the global market for the cruise industry is growing exponentially.

During the high season from October to March, cruise ships with an average of 1,800 to 2,400 passengers usually make a one-day stop in Thailand, Khun Anucha informed, citing data from the Ministry of Tourism.

These are high-end tourists who spend four to 10 times the average and show a preference for boat tours, Thai food, spas, cultural performances and buying souvenirs. Thailand has upgraded its ports to accommodate cruise ships, which has led to an increase in the number of vessels visiting the country, experts explain.

In 2019, before the pandemic, revenue from the cruise segment was 4.84 billion baht. The government is also looking to promote new forms of tourism. For example, government agencies recently teamed up with Netflix to produce "Uncover Thailand: A Creative Travel Guide." The show should feature locations from popular Netflix movies and series from Thailand and other countries and promote Thai culture.

The authorities want to promote new forms of tourism as well as Thailand's "soft power." "This will have economic and social value and provide opportunities for new businesses," Khun Anucha announced.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet has approved the Culture Ministry's proposal to include Pha Khao Ma, a traditional Thai checkered cloth, on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity List.

Traisuree Traisaranakul, a deputy government spokeswoman, stressed that the 60 to 80-cm wide and 120 to 180-cm-long cloth, known for its checkerboard pattern, has long influenced Thai society and traditions.

The government will soon submit its proposal to UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

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