

Ministry aims to improve tourism

Govt document outlines plans to better regulate domestic travel

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Under the theme of “Beautiful China, Happy Journey”, a launch ceremony will be held in Heshun ancient town in Tengchong, Yunnan province, on Friday to celebrate China Tourism Day.

Throughout the month, 10 major promotional events are being held nationwide to mark the day, including “5.19 at 10,000 meters”, during which airlines are offering discounted tickets.

The events are designed to tap into the travel fervor created by the Labor Day holiday earlier this month, but as the recovery of the tourism market gains momentum domestically, there has also been a rise in questionable behavior.

Some companies have been accused of offering unreasonably low-priced tours, while some travelers have complained about tour guides insulting them, or pressuring them to buy things at sites. Such behavior has disrupted the normal market order and has had a negative impact on the overall image of the tourism industry.

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism issued a document prior to the Labor Day holiday calling for further regulation of the industry to strengthen overall market governance, protect the rights and interests of tourists, and enhance market confidence.

The notice urged local authorities to take decisive action against frequent illegal business practices, and to curb the rise of unreasonably inexpensive tours and the proliferation of market irregularities.

Regulating conduct

According to the Yunnan Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism, the province received about 35 million tourists during the recent holiday, up nearly 135 percent compared to 2019, and generated tourism revenues of about 35 billion yuan (\$5 billion).

Simultaneously, the province has stepped up law enforcement inspections of the tourism market, cracking down on illegal activities. During the holiday, 543 complaints were received, all of which were resolved within 24 hours of being lodged.

“Creating a well-functioning market is essential to ensuring a pleasant experience for tourists and to enabling tour companies to operate effectively,” Han Yuanjun, a deputy researcher at the China Tourism Academy, told China Tourism News. “It serves as the fundamental basis for the sustainable development of both the supply and demand sides.”

Han said that further regulating the market will play a crucial role in ensuring that the expectations of tourists are met, in improving the overall environment for public travel, and in promoting the development of tourism today.

The notice highlighted the importance of regulating the conduct of travel agencies. It called for standardizing contracts between companies and their clients, establishing smooth channels for returns and refunds, and ensuring safety on tours.

Song Changyao, dean of the tourism management department at Beijing International Studies University, said that as tour organizers and wholesalers of tourist offerings, travel agencies play a vital role in coordinating and facilitating tourism.



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“Despite the growing trend of independent travel, travel agencies continue to play an indispensable role, particularly in long-distance travel and catering to the needs of senior travelers,” he said.

As tourism continues to recover after optimization of COVID-19 measures, Song said it is very important that agencies not only meet market demands, but also prioritize integrity in their business operations and uphold market order amid the dynamic changes to the sector.

To create an enjoyable travel experience, he suggested that travel agencies ensure they are providing accurate travel information, provide an array of tourist offerings and be more attentive to their clients’ needs.

Guidance for guides

In April, the topic “encountering boat assassins at West Lake in Hangzhou” trended on Sina Weibo’s hot search, attracting widespread attention.

Boat operators were being accused of exploiting customers at the famous lake in Zhejiang province, charging them the standard

fee of 150 yuan for a one-hour boat ride, but only taking them on rides lasting for about half an hour.

In response, the West Lake Water Area Management Office revoked the licenses of three of the operators implicated. The office emphasized the need to intensify regulatory measures and enhance professional ethics and conduct through education and training programs.

Liang Xuesong, vice-president of the Hangzhou Tourism Association, said that although the West Lake case was an isolated incident, its impact affects the overall image of the lake and the cultural tourism sector in Hangzhou.

As tour guides are a vital link in the tourism service chain, directly influencing the travel experiences and satisfaction levels of tourists, the notice also emphasized the importance of enhancing training to elevate the overall competence and quality of the service that guides provide.

It stated that strict regulations regarding the professional conduct of tour guides should be enforced to improve the working environment and required employers, including

travel agencies, to strengthen internal management and properly compensate guides for their work.

Song said that tour guides should not only have a deep understanding of the sites where they work, but also have a passion to serve.

To improve service, it is vital that tour guides deepen their professional knowledge, strengthen their training, optimize tour schedules and gain a sense of belonging to the tourism sector to better meet standards, he said.

The Office of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism also required local cultural and tourism departments to actively collaborate with market supervision, public security, transportation and other departments to establish a robust mechanism for coordinated regulatory work.

Local tourism associations are encouraged to disclose reference prices for their offerings and to take measures to enhance service. They should also educate tourists to be cautious of offerings that are significantly lower priced than normal in order to promote safe, civilized and rational tourism.

Since the beginning of the year,

many cultural and tourism bureau directors have made a name for themselves online as ambassadors for their areas. Their performances in short videos have attracted a considerable number of tourists, not only revitalizing local tourism but also driving the development of regional economies.

Song pointed out that although intensifying efforts in promotional marketing can generate interest, maintaining that interest in the long run requires the existence of a comprehensive range of services.

“Local governments should create shared urban spaces with convenient services such as efficient transportation, clear signage, information centers and consultation services,” he said.

Well-designed facilities, such as hotels, restaurants offering unique culinary experiences and convenient transportation hubs should be complemented by theaters, leisure districts and immersive experiential spaces.

The friendliness of local residents and a sense of urban security also contribute significantly to overall tourist satisfaction, Song added.

Policy Digest

Program to overhaul infrastructure in cities

The Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development will launch a national program later this year to overhaul vital urban infrastructure like bridges, gas pipelines and water supply lines.

The decision was announced by ministry authorities at a meeting in Hefei, capital of Anhui province, on May 11. The ministry has asked cities to learn from pilot programs now running in cities including Hefei and Shanghai, and replicate them.

According to the ministry, the program is an inevitable requirement for building smart, livable and resilient cities. A city’s resilience depends on its capacity to ensure the smooth and safe operation of infrastructure in the face of extreme weather and natural disasters.

Teens can get mental help on WeChat now

A psychological helpline set up by the Communist Youth League of China officially launched an online platform on May 12 to provide young people with free mental health counseling services.

The “12355” helpline has developed a WeChat mini-program that allows teenagers to communicate with mental health counselors via video link or text. The platform currently has more than 2,000 counselors ready to help those in need.

The CYLC opened the “12355” helpline in 2006. It provides more than 400,000 psychological and legal consultations to teenagers across the country every year.

National cereal grain self-sufficiency achieved

China has achieved basic self-sufficiency in cereal grains as it maintains steady development of grain production, after a series of bumper harvests for 19 years in a row.

Speaking at a news conference on May 11, Cong Liang, head of the National Food and Strategic Reserves Administration, said the country’s staple food self-sufficiency rate is above 100 percent, and the cereal self-sufficiency rate stands above 95 percent.

China has consistently maintained its farmland area in excess of the red line of 120 million hectares, Cong said.

According to Cong, the per capita share of grain stands at about 480 kilograms, higher than the internationally recognized security standard of 400 kg.

Number of registered nurses continues to rise

The total number of registered nurses in China exceeded 5.2 million by the end of last year, with roughly 3.7 registered nurses for per 1,000 people, according to the National Health Commission.

Speaking at a news conference on May 11 before International Nurses Day, which fell on May 12, Xing Ruoli, deputy head of the Department of medical administration at the NHC, said that about 300,000 new nurses have joined the workforce each year over the past decade.

By 2025, China aims to have 5.5 million nurses, and the number of registered nurses per 1,000 people is expected to increase to 3.8. In addition, China wants to increase the number of nurses at primary-level health institutions to 1.2 million by then.

CHINA DAILY-XINHUA

Beijing promoting museums during monthlong event

By LI YINGXUE

As part of China Tourism Day on Friday, 10 research and study routes between museums have been created for museum-goers in Beijing.

According to Guan Zhanxiu, executive director of the Beijing Cultural Heritage Conservation Association, the routes are designed along four cultural themes: ancient capital culture, Red culture, innovation culture and Beijing culture. The routes, which take into account the unique features of each participating museum, will be revealed on Friday.

The launch of the routes is part of

Beijing Museum Activity Month, which began on May 1 and will end on June 2.

Under the slogan of “Museum City: Making People’s Lives Better,” Beijing Museum Activity Month aims to fully leverage the advantages of museums around the capital to demonstrate their charm and appeal, according to Bai Chong, director of the museum department of the Beijing Municipal Cultural Heritage Bureau.

During the monthlong event, nearly 300 exhibitions are being held by a wide array of museums, serving the general public in the Bei-

jing area a cultural feast. This is creating an opportunity for people to immerse themselves in the beauty of the museums and their cultural artifacts, Bai said.

Beijing Museum Activity Month kicked off on May 1 at the China Railway Museum’s Dongjiao Branch, and included a three-day Beijing Museum Creative Market as part of the celebration.

On Thursday, which is International Museum Day, the Blue Book of Beijing Museums, which reflects the overall achievements in the development of the city’s museums, will be officially released. This publi-

cation will showcase the accomplishments of Beijing’s regional museums, including their exhibitions and their social education and volunteer programs, Bai said.

The results of the “2022 Annual Selection of Excellent Exhibition Events in Beijing Museums” and the “2022 Annual Selection of Excellent Social Education Cases in Beijing Museums” will also be announced on Thursday.

The newly revamped Beijing Museum Cloud mini-program will also be launched on International Museum Day. The program provides users with detailed and accu-

rate information about museum exhibitions, collections, educational activities and reservation services.

During the month, 10 museums, including the China Railway Museum and the Capital Museum, have decided to extend opening hours for museum-goers who want to visit after work.

On Wednesday, the inaugural Charming Beijing museum volunteer sharing team, which consists of 22 people from 20 museums in the Beijing area, will begin sharing stories about Beijing’s rich cultural heritage, drawing inspiration from the remarkable exhibitions and prominent collections of their respective institutions.

On May 10, the 2023 International

Symposium of the Think Tank for Beijing Cultural Heritage and Museums Development took place at the China Intangible Cultural Heritage Museum.

The event, themed “A City as a Museum,” invited renowned museologists from Italy, Germany, the United States and elsewhere to give speeches to lend an international perspective to the construction of museums in the capital.

On the same day, the Museums Enter Schools event kicked off at the Jiayuan branch of Beijing No 80 High School, with the aim of enhancing collaboration between museums and schools in Beijing, and facilitating the integration of museum resources into the education system.