

Ngong Ping Piazza opens today

Ngong Ping Piazza on Lantau Island officially opens today (August 2), adding a new tourist attraction with rich religious flavour to Hong Kong's tourism portfolio.

The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mrs Rita Lau, today officiated at the piazza's opening ceremony.

Other officiating guests included the Abbot of Po Lin Monastery, Venerable Sik Chi-wai; Chairman of the Islands District Council, Mr Daniel Lam; Commissioner for Tourism, Mr Philip Yung; Director of Civil Engineering and Development, Mr John Chai; Director of Architectural Services, Mrs Marigold Lau; and Managing Director of Ngong Ping 360 Limited, Mr Y T Li.

Speaking at the ceremony, Mrs Lau said the Government was dedicated to enhancing Hong Kong's tourism infrastructure to increase its attractiveness to tourists.

She said the completion of Ngong Ping Piazza would help strengthen the tourism appeal of Ngong Ping and Lantau as a whole.

The piazza links up the various tourist attractions in Ngong Ping, including Po Lin Monastery, the Giant Buddha, Ngong Ping 360 cable car, Ngong Ping Village and Wisdom Path. It facilitates visitors to explore Ngong Ping, which is a popular tourist spot characterised by its religious setting and beautiful natural scenery.

With an area of about 1.5 hectares, Ngong Ping Piazza is the highlight of the "Enhancement of Public Facilities at Ngong Ping, Lantau" programme. The piazza has a strong Buddhist character and blends in with the religious ambience of Ngong Ping.

The piazza has four components, namely the new Pai Lau, Bodhi Path, Di Tan and a Chinese landscaped garden.

At the entrance to the piazza is the new Pai Lau. It is built in the Northern architectural style of the Qing Dynasty to match the style used by Po Lin Monastery, characterised by tranquillity and solemnity. The new Pai Lau leads to the 120-metre Bodhi Path, which is flanked by statues of the "12 divine generals" and 40 lotus-shaped stone lanterns on both sides.

At the end of the Bodhi Path are the piazza centre and the Di Tan, where four lotus ponds have been built to provide a spacious venue for religious ceremonies held by Po Lin Monastery. Visitors can also have a rest at the Chinese landscaped garden nearby, also built in the Northern architectural style.

The “Enhancement of Public Facilities at Ngong Ping, Lantau” programme was launched in February 2008 by the Tourism Commission, the Civil Engineering and Development Department as well as the Architectural Services Department. The total cost of the project is \$77.5 million.

Other items in the project include the construction of a roundabout at the end of Ngong Ping Road, emergency vehicular access to Po Lin Monastery, a public toilet at the Ngong Ping public transport interchange, and the associated storm water drainage works.

Ends/Monday, August 2, 2010

Issued at HKT 17:07