



Tourism Scan

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"The Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism is a Chiang Mai; Thailand based coalition of Regional Ecumenical Organisations and over seventy secular and faith-based groups. It seeks to unite people around collective efforts that negate the undesirable effects of modern tourism and, in its place, institute socially responsible and ethically oriented tourism. It believes that tourism must be based on justice and sustainability for host communities and that, therefore, tourism planning and practice must be democratised. ECOT advocates respect for the protection and dignity of the human rights of women, children, indigenous peoples and workers in the tourist trade. It opposes tourism projects that create environmental devastation."

The world is gripped by 'world cup fever'. In Germany, millions of people have gathered to enjoy an extravaganza. It's a combination of 736 'footballers', 32 nations and more than a billion fans coming together every four years that makes the FIFA World Cup the most popular sporting event on the planet. Indeed, World Cup, Germany 2006, is the year's greatest tourism spectacle.

In the euphoria that this extraordinary spectacle provides the world, we forget a couple of important things. Yes, this astounding tourism spectacle, as we have called it, comes with a social cost- just as most tourism events do. The poor will pay and unknowingly have subsidised the World Cup. Chilling stories of how most football manufacturers use child labour abound. India did not even come close to making it to Germany, but is a country where the largest numbers of footballs are manufactured. Something like 100,000 children work to produce footballs at wages in the range of 10 cents a day and under the most oppressive working conditions. This is true of many other countries too. Much of the gear used by the players will have been manufactured in sweat shops around the world. Worse, women will be 'imported' as sex workers from the poorer nations surrounding Germany- perhaps, even farther off- to satisfy the brutish sexual instincts of male fans- after all they will be the ones who will, in the main, pack the stadiums. "Football and sex belong together," claimed the lawyer of the newly opened 3,000 meter mega brothel in Berlin, built next to the main World Cup venue to accommodate 650 male clients. Despite the tall claims that say: Forget the UN, football will unite the world', one must note seriously the innumerable racist slurs on the field, the hooliganism, the cheap exploitation of national instincts, not to forget the brute exploitation of child players imported into Europe by 'talent scouts' who often use and disabuse these innocent but curious kids before backing them off in disgrace.

Tourism Scan (TC) this month begins with a report on this scandal- under-reported by a media far more interested in the spectacle rather than its unfortunate social consequences. TC also carries an appeal from an organization constituted by child workers to FIFA.

The other reports raise the perennial question that we cannot but pose: 'Who really benefits from tourism'? In the story about 'slum tourism', we read how tourists have taken to a new fad- roaming around streets of Delhi, experiencing the life of poor, especially underprivileged children, understanding their plight, how they earn their livelihood are all gaining in popularity over the last few months. Social activists are up against these slum tours and say it is voyeurism at its worst. Javed Abidi, a disabled rights activist, says, "The children or the slum dwellers no way benefit from this. Celebrities and foreign dignitaries make it a point to visit slums, street children and girls' homes. Children are lined up for photo-ops and it just ends there... there is no accountability after that." The UN initiative of support to Sri Lanka to bring an end to the practice of sex tourism deserves to be lauded. An end to exploitation in tourism needs the active partnership of government, inter-governmental agencies, and civil society if things must really change. We also highlight the situation of Palestine under the title 'Journeys for Justice'- a form of Solidarity Tourism.

We conclude this edition with a report that marks the beginning of a potential clash between environmentalists in The Andaman's and Tourism planners who want government to reduce levels in environmental standards just so the tourism industry can grow. This is a shocking state of affairs for a region of the country which had to bear the brunt of the December 2004 tsunami only because there was indifference to environmental protection standards. Have any lessons been learned?

Ranjan Solomon.

Buying sex is not a sport- Say NO to Germany's prostitution of women during the world cup games in 2006

From June 9 - July 9, 2006, 12 German cities host the World Cup Games. Approximately 3 Million football fans – mostly men – will attend. It is estimated that 40,000 women have been “imported” from Central and Eastern Europe into Germany to “sexually service” the men.

Germany legalized pimping and the sex industry in 2002. However, it is predicted that the legal red light districts will be too small for the thousands of sport/sex tourists in attendance. In preparation for this influx, the German sex industry has erected a massive prostitution complex for the “booming business” expected during the games.

“Football and sex belong together,” claimed the lawyer of the newly opened 3,000 meter mega brothel in Berlin, built next to the main World Cup venue to accommodate 650 male clients. Wooden “sex huts” called “performance boxes” that look like toilets have been built in fenced-in areas the size of a football field, with condoms, showers and parking for the buyers and a special focus on protecting their “anonymity.”

We, Concerned Individuals and Organizations, state:

- **Buying sex is not a sport.** It is sexual exploitation in which women are physically and Psychologically harmed, and women's bodies are treated as commodities to be bought and sold.
- **Treating women's bodies as sexual commodities violates international standards of sport that promote equality, mutual respect and non-discrimination.**

FIFA President J.S. Blatter, “acknowledges the prominent role of sport, and especially football, as a vehicle for delivering clear and firm messages to eradicate the huge blights undermining society around the world.” How will the World Cup Games help eradicate the blight of trafficking and sexual exploitation?

- **Honourable men do not buy sex because they respect the dignity and integrity of all human beings.**
- **No to the organization of prostitution for the World Cup Games.**

We, signers of this Statement, call upon:

- The 32 countries participating in the World Cup Games who have ratified UN Conventions and/or Protocols against prostitution and trafficking to oppose Germany's promotion of prostitution, and publicly dissociate their teams from the prostitution industry.
- Football team members to make public their opposition to this sexual exploitation of women.
- The FIFA Committee and its president to fulfil its social responsibility by opposing the link between football and the sex trade. We call upon them to protest this sexual exploitation of women to the German government and its chancellor Angela Merkel, the German football federation, and its president, Gerhard Mayer-Vorfelder.

- The German government and its chancellor Angela Merkel, the German football federation and its president, Gerhard Mayer-Vorfelder, to stop this traffic in women for prostitution and to discourage the male demand that fosters prostitution.
- All concerned individuals and organizations to join in signing this statement in protest of this public display of prostitution and trafficking in women.



Child labourers appeal to FIFA

Football manufacturing units Monday appealed to the FIFA to bail them out of their pitiable conditions.

Led by Bachpan Bachao Andolan ('Save Childhood Campaign'), a non-government organisation, 17 children working for football manufacturers in Uttar Pradesh's Meerut district assembled at the Gandhi Peace Foundation here and shared their experiences with media persons.

In a memorandum sent to the world football governing body on the occasion of World Cup 2006, these children appealed: 'We wish that football becomes an instrument of pleasure, harmony and unity for all in the world. However, we appeal that this should not happen at the cost of our childhood, education and development.'

Kailash Satyarthi, chairman of the voluntary group, said big companies outsource work to small contractors who take unfair advantage of the poor people in places like Meerut.

'They are employing these tender hands but pay only between Rs.3 and Rs.5 for stitching a ball - it is almost 40 times less than its retail price. Apart from cruelly exploiting them, they are also taking away their childhood.

'FIFA must issue proper guidelines to all football exporters to stop employing child labour in this industry. Last year, India earned Rs.4 billion by exporting sports goods, and 38 percent of it came from exporting footballs alone,' Satyarthi said.

Said Bobesh Kant, a 12-year-old who stopped stitching footballs after working in a unit for two years: 'We want to study and become successful in life. I appeal to all my friends not to work for football companies. It kills their childhood and makes us labourers.'

Uma, a nine-year-old girl who helps her mother, sister and brother in stitching balls, said she was enrolled in Class 3 but was not able to go to her school.

Monday June 26, 09:57 PM Indo Asian News Service

Now, it's the turn of "slum tourism" in India

By Satish G. | eTN Asia

Some call it "slum tours." A section puts it as "poorism" for travel enthusiasts. Whatever term may be used for this new form of tourism, tourists roaming around streets of Delhi, experiencing the life of poor, especially underprivileged children, understanding their plight, how they earn their livelihood are all gaining in popularity over the last few months.

As per the information available, in Delhi, former street dwellers take the tourists from the New Delhi Railway Station platform through makeshift homes under footbridges to explain how the children live, what they do for a living and where they sleep.

CNN-IBN reported: "If you are tired of Mughal architecture and the sprawling Lutyens' Bungalow Zone then the living horrors of nearly 2,000 street children in Delhi could be a new travel offer. Wading through the by lanes of Paharganj, 'poorism' for travel enthusiasts takes one into real India and is being popularly described as Slum Tourism. The New Delhi Railway Station has been home and refuge for four-year-old Mahadiyah and his companions for the longest time they can remember."

The tour is priced at US\$4.5 a ticket and spans over two hours. Those, who organize such tours, claim that the tours are not undertaken to showcase poverty but sensitize and create awareness about the way of life here.

According to news agency PTI, in Delhi, these slum tours started in April this year, and are already attracting lot of western and Indian travellers. "Conducted by the Salam Balak Trust, an NGO here, their guide, Javed, a former slum dweller, who says he himself lived on the railway station for seven years, takes these visitors around the New Delhi Railway Station, the slums behind it, the rag pickers who separate the plastics and other waste collected from the station," it reported.

Some have even taken objection to this. As per the information available, social activists are up against these slum tours and say it is voyeurism at its worst. Javed Abidi, a disabled rights activist, says, "The children or the slum dwellers no way benefit from this. Celebrities and foreign dignitaries make it a point to visit slums, street children and girls' homes. Children are lined up for photo-ops and it just ends there... there is no accountability after that."



UN helps Sri Lanka fight child sex tourism

Proclaiming a message of "zero tolerance" for child sex tourism in Sri Lanka, the United Nations is supporting a two-year action plan launched by the country's tourist board to stop such exploitation, targeting visitors, children and adolescents, hoteliers, journalists, families and community leaders.

"A child who is a victim of sexual abuse may suffer serious, lifelong or even life-threatening consequences," UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) senior program coordinator Yasmin Ali Haque said of the campaign, launched on Sunday.

“As the first country in South Asia with a national plan of action to combat child sex tourism, Sri Lanka has a unique opportunity to lead the way for other countries in the region.”

UNICEF is providing the Sri Lanka Tourist Board with financial and technical support. As well as mass media campaigns on television, radio and in newspapers, messages will be relayed to tourists through a range of devices such as in-flight magazines and videos, billboards, posters, car-stickers and flyers. Legal penalties for the sexual exploitation of children range from five to 20 years imprisonment.

While the exact numbers are not known, it is estimated that thousands of Sri Lankan children are drawn into prostitution every year, the majority of them boys, with money, clothes, pens, sweets, food and sometimes the chance to travel overseas.

They are exploited by foreign tourists, as well as by local people. The most vulnerable are those from poor and marginalized communities who have little supervision from their families.

Last year 549,000 foreign tourists visited Sri Lanka, with the figure projected to rise to 600,000 in the current year, and to 1 million by 2010.

The UN International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates that 1.8 million children globally are exploited in the multi-billion dollar commercial sex industry, which includes child sex tourism.

Source: United Nations



Vietnam gears up for minority of tourists who exploit children sexually **By Satish G. | eTN Asia**

Ready to take a stern action against “tourists behaving suspiciously around local children,” Vietnam has launched a campaign, signalling a strong message for those visitors who indulge in shameful acts with children.

The campaign would encourage local citizens and responsible tourists to use the national hotline if they observe tourists behaving suspiciously around local children.

The new campaign is a result of a 10-year partnership between ASEAN, the Australian government and child protection agency Child Wise, which has resulted in improved laws, better law enforcement, heightened surveillance, and jail terms for tourists who sexually exploit children.

“Recent events had shown there was a deep need to protect our children and our tourism industry. By working in partnership with the business sector, we will send a strong message that child-sex offenders are not welcome in Vietnam,” Deputy Director of Vietnam Administration of Tourism Pham Tu said.

Australia’s Ambassador to Vietnam Bill Tweddell said that most tourists were responsible travellers and that the Australian Government was committed to protecting children by helping to stop the small minority of tourists who exploit children sexually.

Source: The Economist print edition, June 22nd, 2006 | HONG KONG

Journey for justice- YMCA and YWCA Joint Advocacy Initiative enters fourth year

The Joint Advocacy Initiative of the East Jerusalem YMCA and YWCA of Palestine.

As in previous years, the Joint Advocacy Initiative is partnering with the Alternative Tourism Group (ATG) in organizing an olive picking program in Palestine from the 26th of October until the 4th of November. The program will consist of picking olives in selected fields, visiting religious sites and witnessing realities of occupation, lectures, and cultural activities. If you are interested in joining, please request a registration form.

As the fifth consecutive planting season is yet to start in December of this year, new organizations and individuals are currently showing their interest in sponsoring olive trees and contributing to the expected success of this coming planting season. It is our continuous goal to plant more trees every year and in more locations than the year before. We will not be able to fulfil this goal without the support of our existing and new sponsors.

After a long wait, we are proud to unveil our new [online sponsorships' database](#), where sponsors can view the location of their planted olive trees. Please visit and feel free to send any comments. We will be updating this database as soon as new olive trees are planted in the coming planting season.

- Latest statistics from the Ministry of Agriculture show that 465,998 olive trees were uprooted since the beginning of the second Intifada on 28/09/2000.
- We believe that together we bring hope in a time of hopelessness and we move a step forward towards peace and justice in Palestine.

For the last three years in succession, young leaders from many various countries went to Palestine, to show solidarity with Palestinian youth by experiencing a little of what it is like to live under occupation. They were on a "Journey for Justice". The idea was that youth in other parts of the world should get involved in the situation in the Middle East in a practical way, and not only read or hear about it. In order for young people to understand more of the everyday life of the youth from Palestine, it was felt that it is important that young people meet and experience each others reality. It is a journey that lasts far beyond the actual trip and aims not only at giving a new perspective to the participants but also to widen the YMCA and YWCA network by involving International youth and youth networking with special interest in Palestine

Their program includes a welcome and introduction to a historical and political background, advocacy work and campaigning, guided tour around Jerusalem Wall and settlements. Participants then visit rehabilitation program presentation, Bethlehem University, Nativity church and old city of Bethlehem, PLC members and political leaders, dinner and home stays with families. They tour inside refugee camp, refugees issue presentation, swim in the Dead sea, Jericho. They even get to experience what roadblocks in the north can be like> Other aspects include a visit to international missions in Hebron, old city and occupied market, Ibrahimi Mosque, meeting with Israeli settlers, joining protesting Palestinian families and farmers. They also get to meet Al-Jazeera reporters, PLO representatives, visit the Al-Aqsa mosque and Holy Sepulcher, meeting religious leaders, traditional evening and dinner. Ibrahim

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Tourism Ministry wants coast curbs off

Vrinda Gopinath

NEW DELHI, APRIL 10

In a move that will make environmentalists see red, the Tourism Ministry has recommended to Environment Minister D Raja to reduce the 500m regulated zone along the Indian coast to a mere 50m if tourism is to bring economic benefits to locals of the region.

Tourism officials say if the government is serious about encouraging tourism as a primary source of livelihood, it must de-regulate the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) which stipulates that there will be no industrial development along India's vast coastline, in the Lakshadweep archipelago and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. India has a coast about 7,516 km long with 4,198 islands, spread along the main coast of Andaman, Nicobar and Lakshadweep.

Officials say if the islands of Andaman or Lakshadweep are to be considered for tourism development, the CRZ rules ensure there is no land available to build pleasure resorts or any other recreational amenities. "There is the coast on one side and forests on the other, so there is no question of development if the regulations are followed," says an official. "And with the CRZ rules, our resorts have no charm and no hotelier is willing to invest 500m inland."

Now, the Tourism Ministry has recommended that the CRZ rules be modified on a case-to-case basis; in turn, it will strictly ensure that eco-friendly resorts are built, and that recreational activities on the sea and coast are environment-friendly.

The ministry is already hopeful, going by the recommendations of the Dr M S Swaminathan Committee which was appointed to "examine and review" the CRZ notification. The committee has recommended the entire coastal belt be mapped and the CRZ be applied according to the prevailing conditions of the region.

The CRZ came in response to the Environment Protection Act of 1986, later notified in 1991, and was introduced by the late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to regulate the coast. This was in response to environmentalists' call against blatant destruction of the coastal area by developers, contractors and hoteliers leading to degradation of coastal ecosystems and diminishing living resources.

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<http://www.indianexpress.com/story/2186.html>

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