



Plea to channel more tourists to Polonnaruwa Tourism Village

ANANDA KANNANGARA

Tourist guides, hoteliers and shop owners currently engaged in business in the Polonnaruwa Tourism Village (PTV) recently requested Tourism Minister Prasanna Ranatunga to help promoting their business in the village by directing tour operators to bring adequate tourists since the poor arrival of foreign tourists to the village at present has badly affected their business activities.

The PTV business community says at the time when a large number of foreign tourists are visiting the country almost every day the Tourism Ministry should encourage tour operators to bring foreign tour-

ists to the Polonnaruwa Tourism Village also to assist over 10,000 people engaged in various business activities. During the last one and a half years almost all businessmen in the village who mostly depend on foreign tourists have been facing immense economic hardships due to lack of tourists visiting the village.

According to Tourism Ministry statistics due to the Government's special tourist promotion programme that began during the mid of last year over 3,000 foreign tourists are currently visiting Sri Lanka everyday. The statistics also revealed that approximately 4,677

tourists had arrived in the country on February 12 (Saturday) from various destinations.

Meanwhile, PTV Traders Association member Sanath Kumara says that the admission charge of Rs. 5,000 from each tourist who is entering the Polonnaruwa Tourism Village is the main reason that tour guides are reluctant to bring tourists to the village. Kumara further said his Association requested Tourism Minister Prasanna Ranatunga to immediately intervene in this matter and take suitable measures to help nearly 75,000 people who depend on providing services to foreign tourists.