

Seoul City Plans to Scale up Existing Casinos

The Seoul city government Monday unveiled a plan to expand three foreigners-only casinos in the nation's capital in a bid to attract more foreign tourists.

The city administration will apply to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism for permission to extend the casinos as part of an effort to lure 12 million foreign tourists a year by 2010, city officials said.

The three are currently located in the Sheraton Walkerhill Grande Hotel, Millennium Seoul Hilton Hotel and OakWood Premier Coex Center.

„Asia's other rival cities, such as Hong Kong, Singapore and Macau, are aggressively promoting and newly establishing casino facilities for foreign tourists. Seoul needs to cultivate its competitiveness as well,“ said an official.

Rather than building new casinos, the Seoul city is seeking to move the existing casinos to alternative locations to enlarge them, in order to circumvent strict regulations for the opening of new casinos, the official said.

The central government is empowered to license and control casinos, and allows opening of a new casino only when there is an increase of 600,000 foreign visitors per year.