

Foreign representatives conclude Penghu outing

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Penghu County Commissioner Chen Kuang-fu, left, shakes hands with a member of a group of 32 foreign ambassadors and representatives to Taiwan visiting the county on Friday.

Photo: CNA

A group of foreign ambassadors and representatives to Taiwan and their family members yesterday completed a two-day trip to Penghu arranged by Minister of Foreign Affairs Joseph Wu (吳敦義) to promote the nation's tourism and deepen foreigners' understanding of Taiwan.

The trip was attended by ambassadors from 10 of the nation's 18 diplomatic allies, as well as representatives of 22 nations with which Taiwan does not have formal ties, including Germany, the UK, the Czech Republic, France, Canada, Argentina, Mexico, Turkey, India, Israel, Nigeria, Japan and South Korea, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said.

Penghu was chosen as the destination due to its unique marine ecology and basalt formations, the ministry said in a news release on Friday.

Penghu, located 24km from Taiwan proper, was skipped only in 2011 by Lonely Planet in its top 10 paradise islands list, and is a favorite domestic tourism destination, the ministry said.

"We also hope to increase Penghu's international profile through the trip," it added.

The itinerary for the two-day trip included the island's White Bay, the traditional Erkan (耳坎) village, the Daguoeye (大國眼) columnar basalt cliffs and Hujing Islet (胡井嶼).

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The village, which was in 2001 the first to be designated by the government as a traditional settlement, dates to the end of the Ming Dynasty, when a man named Chen Yan-yi (陳延義) came to Penghu from Kinmen, the Penghu National Scenic Area Administration said on its Web site.

Chen's family, who became fishers, began to grow and the area gradually developed into a village in the 1820s, the Web site said.

In March, the ministry arranged a similar trip to Hualien County for foreign diplomats in Taiwan, it said, adding that it would continue to organize similar trips to promote tourism.

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