

Visitors banned from Potala Palace roof

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(Xinhua) Visitors to the Potala Palace are to be denied access to its seven golden roofs in an attempt to prevent further damage by the large numbers of tourists that visit the centuries-old palace. The ban comes into force once a renovation project, intended to reinforce the building, has been completed some time in 2005. Doubts have been raised about the quality of the renovation work being carried out largely by Chinese workers who allegedly lack knowledge of local techniques and conditions. The former winter palace of the Dalai Lama and UNESCO world heritage site is the main destination for tourists reaching Lhasa but it is also a pilgrimage site for Tibetans. It received 443,000 visitors between January and October 2005, even after the authorities took measures in May 2003 to limit the number of visitors to 1,600 a day

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