

Paradise City, Korea's first integrated resort



An artist's rendering of Paradise City, Korea's first integrated resort that will be built on Yeongjong Island, Incheon, jointly by Paradise Group and Sega Sammy Holdings in 2017 / Courtesy of Paradise Group

New tourist destination in Incheon will feature casino, hotels, theme park

By Kim Rahn

Korea's first integrated resort will debut in March 2017 on Yeongjong Island, Incheon.

Paradise Sega Sammy, a joint venture of Korean casino operator Paradise Group and Japanese entertainment company Sega Sammy Holdings, had a groundbreaking ceremony for the Paradise City resort on Nov. 20.

An integrated resort is a tourist facility that caters to both business and leisure tourists and usually has hotels, shopping malls, convention and exhibition halls, performance halls, gaming venues, restaurants and theme parks. Las Vegas, Singapore and Macau have some such resorts.

The construction for the 1.3-trillion-won project started about three years after Paradise Group was selected as the preferred bidder for the development of Incheon International Airport's International Business Center (IBC-I) in 2011.

Paradise Group holds a 55-percent stake in the joint venture, while Sega Sammy Holdings has a 45-percent stake. The land for the resort is being leased from Incheon International Airport Corp. for 50 years.



Paradise Group Chairman Chun Phil-lip delivers a speech at the groundbreaking ceremony for Paradise City on Nov. 20.

A five-star hotel, a boutique hotel, Korea's largest foreigner-only casino, a convention center, the hallyu-themed K-Plaza, an indoor theme park, restaurants and a luxury spa will be built on the 330,000-square-meter land.

"Paradise City is

Korea's first integrated resort and takes advantage of hallyu for its contents. We believe it will appeal to travelers," Choi Jong-hwan, CEO of Paradise Sega Sammy, said in a media conference at the construction site.

"We hope that we can contribute to making Incheon a global tourist destination and leading Korean integrated resort business."

He said the location is also one of the resort's strong points. The resort is within 10-minutes walking distance from Incheon International Airport, only 58 kilometers away from the center of Seoul and within a four-hour flight's reach of some 1.3 billion people from around the world.

Choi said Paradise Group chose to partner with Sega Sammy Holdings because "Sega Sammy has know-how in entertainment contents such as games and animation, while we (Paradise Group) have know-how in casino operations. Sega Sammy will do a great deal in developing characters or games at the kids and family zones in the resort."

Several globally renowned design and architecture companies will work on the resort, including Wimberly Allison Tong & Goo, G.A Design International, Hirsch Bedner Associates, Hawkins Brown, Lifescapes International and Gansam Architects & Partners.

"Most of the revenues may come from the casino. But we will also focus on the other facilities, as a resort can create synergy between integrated casino and non-casino businesses," Choi said.

Paradise Group Chairman Chun Phil-lip also said, "Paradise City will be the final destination for tourists from all over the world and will become a landmark in Korea's tourism industry."

Paradise Group is Korea's largest casino operator, operating five casinos across the country and making about 640 billion won in sales last year. Meanwhile, Sega Sammy Holdings is a Japanese entertainment firm operating in the game, animation and theme park industries and making 321 billion yen in sales last year.

An integrated leisure complex

The main building of Paradise city will be a five-star hotel with 711 rooms, including pool villas. The hotel will have luxury restaurants as well as recreational facilities available year-round, such as indoor and outdoor pools, a spa and a fitness center.

The nation's largest casino will also be located in the hotel and will have 160 tables, 388 electronic table games and 350 slot machines. VIPs of the

foreigner-only casino will be able to use a separate casino located on the top floor of the hotel as well as a separate lounge and entrance.

A boutique hotel with 103 rooms with more modern designs will also be built.

For international meetings, a 1,200-person capacity convention center with a grand ballroom will be constructed.

Paradise City will also feature K-Plaza, a multicultural complex. The complex will take advantage of Korea's advanced technologies and hallyu and will have a theme park using 3D hologram technology, a hallyu star museum, Korean restaurants and art galleries.

Foreign visitors will be able to experience a Korean public bathhouse, or "jjimjilbang," at the premium healing spa.

Paradise City will also be able to synergize with nearby tourist attractions in Incheon. For example, those staying at Paradise City's hotels can visit the surrounding area's attractions.

rahni@koreatimes.co.kr,