

The opening ceremony of the 2019 Bai Dinh Pagoda festival was held in Gia Sinh commune, Gia Vien district, the northern province of Ninh Binh on February 10 or the 6th day of the lunar new year.



Secretary of the provincial Party Committee Nguyen Thi Thanh beat the drum to kick off the festival, which saw the participation of dignitaries from the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha and thousands of Buddhist followers.

The participants offered incense to pray for favourable weather and bumper crops.

Bai Dinh Pagoda, which was built thousands of years ago, has become one of the standout landscapes of the ancient capital. The pagoda has been upgraded and expanded, representing the Party's and State's attention to the freedom of belief and religion.

The new Bai Dinh Pagoda, also known as Bai Dinh Buddhism Spiritual Centre, covers 700ha, and is the largest in Vietnam in terms of size. "Bai Dinh" means "the worship of heaven and earth, Buddha and celestial angels". The pagoda is part of the Trang An Landscape Complex, which was recognised as a World Cultural and Natural Heritage Site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in 2014.

Festival kicks off at Vietnam's largest pagoda

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It is now holding several national record-setting relics, including the largest bronze Buddha statue (150 tonnes), the largest bronze bell (30 tonnes), and the largest number of Arhat statues (500).

The festival will last until the end of the third lunar month.

Hanoi: Huong pagoda festival opens



The three-month Huong Pagoda Festival, the largest of its kind in Vietnam, kicked off in Huong Son commune, Hanoi's outlying district of My Duc on February 10 (the sixth day of the lunar new year), attracting numerous visitors with less congestion than previous years.

The organising board said up to 124,500 pilgrims flocked to Huong Pagoda, about 60km from downtown Hanoi, from February 7-9, even 46,800 on February 8 alone. On February 10, the figure is estimated at over 50,000.

Going to Huong Pagoda is a spiritual journey to the Buddhist Land – where the Goddess of Mercy leads a religious life.

Visitors have sightseeing trips to pagodas, temples and caves which are the main attractions at the Huong pagoda festival, and join ceremonies to ask favours from Lord Buddha.

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Built in the late 17th century, the Huong Pagoda Complex has a large number of pagodas, temples and caverns filled with marvelous stalactites and stalagmites.

The Huong Tich cavern has the autograph of Lord Trinh Sam in 1770, describing the cavern as the most beautiful cave in the country.

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Source: *The Bai Dinh Pagoda Festival opens on February 10. (Photo: tienphong.vn) - Bridge*