

MAHATHIR-CHARTERS
FROM K.H. CHAN

FRANKFURT, MAY 24 (BERNAMA) — DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD HAS ANNOUNCED A PROPOSAL TO TURN PENANG INTO A TOURISTS' GATEWAY TO THE EAST.

HE TOLD THREE MAJOR WEST GERMAN TOUR AND CHARTER FLIGHT OPERATORS AT A MEETING AT THE HOLIDAY INN HERE YESTERDAY THAT MALAYSIA WOULD ACCEPT CHARTER FLIGHTS FROM GERMANY INTO PENANG.

AT PRESENT, CHARTER FLIGHTS FROM GERMANY ARE GOING TO BANGKOK WHICH IS A DISTRIBUTION POINT FOR TOURISTS GOING TO OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE REGION.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID AFTER THE MEETING: +WHAT WE WOULD LIKE IS FOR THEM TO FLY TO PENANG.+

PENANG COULD BE A DISTRIBUTION POINT FOR THE REGION.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR ADDED THAT HOWEVER IT WOULD TAKE SOME TIME TO PROMOTE MALAYSIA BEFORE THE OPERATORS COULD DECIDE TO LAUNCH THE CHARTER FLIGHTS. — BERNAMA MORE 1123/A1

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MAHATHIR-CHARTERS 2 FRANKFURT

THE THREE COMPANIES WHICH MET DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR WERE: +CONDOR, A SUBSIDIARY OF LUFTHANSA, AND THE LARGEST OF THE WEST GERMAN CHARTER COMPANIES. IT HAS CHARTER FLIGHTS INTO BANGKOK TWICE A WEEK.

+N-U-R (NECKERMANN AND REISEN), A TOUR OPERATOR WHICH IS OFFERING TRIPS INTO MALAYSIA FROM BANGKOK, AND +TERRAMAR, WHICH ALSO OFFERS TOURS TO MALAYSIA.

IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT THERE HAS BEEN A DROP IN THE NUMBER OF WEST GERMAN TOURISTS GOING TO BANGKOK — FROM 85,956 IN 1976 TO 79,061 IN 1977.

ONE OF THE COMPANIES, IT IS UNDERSTOOD, INFORMED THE MEETING THAT FOR CHARTER FLIGHTS TO BE ECONOMIC THERE WOULD HAVE TO BE AT LEAST 20 CHARTERS A SEASON (EACH SEASON IS ABOUT SIX MONTHS).

THE COMPANIES ALSO FELT THAT AT PRESENT MOST OF THE BEACH HOTELS IN PENANG WERE NOT READY YET IN TERMS OF FACILITIES.

THE PROCESS OF BUILDING UP A CHARTER MARKET WOULD TAKE ABOUT THREE YEARS.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR ALSO MET THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF BISON-WERKE, TO DISCUSS THE COMPANY'S PROPOSED WOOD-CEMENT BOARD AND PRE-FABRICATED HOUSING PROJECT IN MALAYSIA.

LATER, THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER FLEW TO NUREMBERG TO VISIT THE KLOCKNER STEEL FACTORY.

MEANWHILE, ABOUT 24 COMPANIES HAD INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS WITH MEMBERS OF THE MISSION ON MONDAY AND YESTERDAY. — BERNAMA