

PM-TOURISM
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(P)

KUCHING, SEPT. 9 (BERNAMA) --- THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO MAKE MALAYSIA A MAJOR TOURIST DESTINATION IN VIEW OF THE VAST BENEFITS TO BE DERIVED FROM THE TOURISM INDUSTRY.

ANNOUNCING THIS TODAY, PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERIDR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID THE INDUSTRY COULD BOOST THE INCOME OF THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE IF ALL QUARTERS WORKED FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE CONCEPT.

LAUNCHING THE PANTAI DAMAI RESORT PROJECT AT TELUK BANDUN, ABOUT 40KM FROM HERE, HE EXPLAINED THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S ENCOURAGEMENT OF CONSTRUCTION OF TOURIST CENTRES IN THE COUNTRY WAS AIMED AT GENERATING OPPORTUNITIES THAT COULD BE UTILIZED BY THE PEOPLE TO IMPROVE THEIR INCOMES.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS INCLUDED SUPPLY OF FOODSTUFFS AND HANDICRAFT PRODUCTS TO THE CENTRES.

HE REMINDED HOWEVER THAT LOCAL CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS MUST NOT BE SACRIFICED IN EFFORTS TO DEVELOP THE TOURISM INDUSTRY. --MORE

+FOREIGN TOURISTS COMING HERE MAY INTRODUCE THEIR OWN WAY OF LIFE TO LOCALS BUT THIS WILL NOT INFLUENCE US, IF WE HOLD FAST TO OUR OWN CULTURAL VALUES,+ HE ADDED.

EARLIER, DATUK SERI DE MAHATHIR HIT OUT AT AN +EDUCATED -GROUP+ THAT CRITICIZED THE GOVERNMENT FOR ALLEGEDLY NOT DOING ANYTHING TO ERADICATE THE POVERTY OF THE PEOPLE.

HE SAID THE SAME GROUP WOULD BE THE ONE TO JUMP IF THE GOVERNMENT TRIED TO BRING DEVELOPMENT TO THE PEOPLE.

+IN SHORT, THIS GROUP IS CONFUSED AND DOES NOT KNOW WHAT IT REALLY WANTS. +

HE ALSO SAID THAT IN IMPLEMENTING DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS, CHANGES IN THE ENVIRONMENT AND WAY OF LIFE OF THE PEOPLE WERE UNAVOIDABLE.

--MORE

+WE CANNOT ESCAPE FROM CHANGE- IF WE WANT TO ACHIEVE PROGRESS,+ HE ADDED.

HE HOPED THE GROUP REALIZED THAT IF THE PEOPLE WERE KEPT AT THEIR CURRENT STANDARD OF LIVING, THEY WOULD NEVER PROGRESS.

ON DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN SARAWAK, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE STATE HAD UNDERGONE RAPID DEVELOPMENT SINCE INDEPENDENCE.

KUCHING, FOR EXAMPLE, WAS GROWING FAST AND SHOULD, NOW BE MADE A CITY.

MEANWHILE, SARAWAK CHIEF MINISTER DATUK PATINGGI HAJITAIB MAHMUD ANNOUNCED THAT THE STATE GOVERNMENT WAS PLANNING CONSTRUCTION OF A ROAD LINKING KUCHING AND THE NEW TOURIST RESORT.

AT PRESENT, THE RESORT WAS ACCESSIBLE ONLY BY AIR OR RIVER. --MORE

THE COMPLEX, WHICH WILL HAVE FACILITIES SUCH AS ACCOMMODATION, LAND AND WATER SPORTS AMENITIES, A CULTURAL CENTRE AND A MARKET, COSTS \$115 MILLION.

THE PROJECT COVERING 1,200 HECTARES OF LAND IS UNDERTAKEN BY A SUBSIDIARY OF THE SARAWAK ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION AND IS EXPECTED TO BE FULLY COMPLETED IN 1988.

ALSO PRESENT AT THE LAUNCHING CEREMONY WERE DATUK SERIDATIN PADUKA DR SITI HASMAH, THE CHIEF MINISTER'S WIFE DATIN PATINGGI HAJAH LAILA, AND CULTURE, YOUTH AND SPORTS MINISTER DATUK DR SULAIMAN DAUD. -BERNAMA 1815MST 09 09 84