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Kuantan, Feb 22 (BERNAMA) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said the government will make efforts to bring in foreign exchange into the country through tourism.

All potential areas with tourist attraction such as Tasik Chini, Tasik Bera and Gunung Tahan in Pahang would be developed, he told reporters.

The prime minister toured the peak of Gunung Tahan, the highest mountain in Peninsular Malaysia, after arriving there by an RMAF helicopter and also visited Tasik Chini and made an aerial inspection of Tasik Bera.

The prime minister was accompanied by Pahang Menteri Besar Datuk Najib Tun Razak and a number of government officials.

He said the 2,400 metre Gunung Tahan could be provided with facilities to encourage those keen on mountaineering.

The prime minister was impressed with the summit of Gunung Tahan which had room for two helicopter landing pads and runway for light planes.

However he said the government at present had no plans to provide such facilities.

He directed the army to build a 64km jeep track from Merapoh to the foot of the mountain for the convenience of those wishing to scale the mountain.

Those wishing to climb higher mountains in the region or the peaks of the Himalayas could get their training by climbing Gunung Tahan, he added.

He also suggested that the Pahang government build a log cabin on the summit or half-way along the slope for the climbers.

The prime minister was also told that the Pahang Tenggara Development Authority (DARA) had undertaken a study for the development of Tasik Chini.

The general manager of the Pahang Development Authority (LKNP) Encik Long Ahmad Zainuddin said the result of the study showed that the area could be developed as a tourist centre.

Tasik Chini covers an area of 161.8 hectares.

Last year 3,500 people visited Tasik Chini, mostly foreign tourists who had earlier been to Kelab Mediterranean, Cherating.

He said that at present Tasik Chini did not have any basic facilities and the Pahang government proposed to include the development of the area under the Fifth Malaysia Plan.--BERNAMA

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