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MAHATHIR-PACIFIC

KUALA LUMPUR, MARCH 12 (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH THE RESPONSE OF HOTELIERS TO HIS CALL TO REDUCE ROOM RATES.

SPEAKING AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE PAN PACIFIC HOTEL HERE, HE SAID THE RATES HAD BEEN CUT BY AS MUCH AS 40 PERCENT SINCE HIS CALL TO THEM TO REDUCE THE RATES.

+ROOMS WHICH ONCE COST \$250 PER DAY HAVE NOW GONE DOWN TO \$90,+ HE SAID, ADDING THAT THIS WAS A WELCOME MOVE TO BOOST TOURISM IN THE COUNTRY.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO SAID THAT THE MALAYSIAN HOTELS HAD MADE TREMENDOUS PROGRESS AND THEIR SERVICES NOW WERE SECOND TO NONE.

HE HOPED THAT MORE JAPANESE WOULD VISIT MALAYSIA NOW THAT THE JAPANESE YEN HAD APPRECIATED THUS MAKING IT CHEAPER FOR THEM TO VISIT HERE. -- MORE

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+THE FOREIGN EXCHANGE WE EARN FROM THE JAPANESE TOURISTS WILL LESSEN OUR BURDEN FOR THE REPAYMENT OF LOANS,+ HE ADDED.

ON NEXT MONTH'S PACIFIC AREA TRAVEL ASSOCIATION (PATA) CONFERENCE, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE COUNTRY HAD BEEN SPRUCED UP FOR THE OCCASION AND HOPED THE PROCESS WOULD CONTINUE AFTER THE CONFERENCE.

EARLIER, SRI PACIFIC CORPORATION SDN BHD CHAIRMAN DATUK ABDUL RAHIM ABDUL RAHMAN SAID THE LOCAL TRAVEL TRADE MEMBERS SHOULD NOT RELY SOLELY ON THE MALAYSIAN AIRLINE SERVICE (MAS) AND THE TOURIST DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (TDC) TO GET MORE TOURISTS TO COME TO MALAYSIA.

+BOTH SINGAPORE AND THAILAND PRESENT GREAT OPPORTUNITIES AS GATEWAYS FOR FOREIGN VISITORS TO OUR COUNTRY,+ HE ADDED.

THEREFORE, THE LOCAL TRADE MEMBERS MUST WORK CLOSELY WITH THE RESPECTIVE AIRLINES AND TOURISM PROMOTION BODIES IN THESE MARKETS TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO OFFER MALAYSIA AS AN EXTENSION FOR VISIT BY TOURISTS ARRIVING TO THE REGION, HE SAID. -- BERNAMA

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