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MAHATHIR-TOURISM  
BM

SEPANG, JULY 1 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR TODAY URGED THOSE INVOLVED IN THE TOURIST INDUSTRY TO BE FAR SIGHTED TO ENSURE THAT THE SECTOR CONTINUED TO BENEFIT EVERYONE.

+TOURISM IS A LONGTERM INVESTMENT AND A LITTLE OF WHAT WE EARN TODAY SHOULD BE SET ASIDE FOR TOMORROW,+ HE SAID WHEN OPENING THE BAGANG LALANG SEA RESORT HERE.

COURTESY AND A WARM HOSPITALITY WERE VITAL TO ENSURE THAT TOURISTS CONTINUED TO COME TO THIS COUNTRY, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID.

+IF WE TREAT THEM A LITTLE BETTER, WE CAN GET MORE MONEY FROM THEM, LET'S NOT PUT SAND IN OUR RICE BOWL BY ADOPTING A NON-BENEFICIAL ATTITUDE,+ HE ADDED. -- MORE

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BY WAY OF EXAMPLE, HE QUOTED AN INSTANCE WHEN A FISHERMEN LENT HIS BOAT TO A TOURIST TO GO TO AN ISLAND BUT REFUSED TO ALLOW THE TOURIST TO STAY LONGER ON THE ISLAND +AS HE FELT THERE WAS NO POINT IN ENTERTAINING THE REQUEST AS THEY ONLY COME ONCE.+

SUCH AN ATTITUDE NOT ONLY ADVERSELY AFFECTED THE TOURIST INDUSTRY BUT ALSO GAVE A WRONG IMPRESSION OF MALAYSIANS, HE SAID.

ON CLAIMS THAT THE TOURIST INDUSTRY WAS NOT PROFITABLE BUT WAS ONLY A BURDEN TO THE NATION AS THE TOURISTS COME OVER AND DIRTY THIS COUNTRY, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THEY WERE BASELESS AS TOURISM BROUGHT MUCH PROFIT.

WHEN A TOURIST SPENT MONEY IT WAS NOT ONLY THE GOVERNMENT WHICH BENEFITED BUT ALSO THE HOTEL AND TOURIST RESORT OPERATORS WHO PROVIDED EMPLOYMENT TO THE UNEMPLOYED AND BUSINESS FOR THE FOOD SUPPLIERS, HE SAID. -- MORE

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+IF MORE PEOPLE GET JOBS, THERE WILL BE MORE PEOPLE TO SPEND AND THIS WILL BENEFIT FOOD HAWKERS AND HANDICRAFT SELLERS WHO WILL GET MORE CUSTOMERS,+ HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID FOR EVERY \$1 PROFIT WHICH THE TOURIST INDUSTRY EARNED, THE GOVERNMENT RECEIVED 35 SEN IN TAX AND FROM THIS TAX THE GOVERNMENT WAS ABLE TO PROVIDE FACILITIES SUCH AS CLINICS, ROADS AND BRIDGES TO THE PEOPLE.

THE \$500,000 RESORT SPRAWLS OVER 4.5 HECTARES AND COMPRISES SIX CHALETS AND THREE HOSTELS WHICH CAN ACCOMMODATE 200 PEOPLE AND FACILITIES FOR HOLIDAY CAMPS. MORE FACILITIES WILL BE ADDED LATER.

THE RESORT IS MANAGED BY KOPERASI PEMBANGUNAN DAERAH SEPANG. -- BERNAMA

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