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MAHATHIR-TOURISM
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KUALA LUMPUR, SEPT 5 (BERNAMA) -- THE TOURISM INDUSTRY HAS EMERGED AS ONE OF THE BIGGEST INDUSTRIES IN THE COUNTRY AND HAS BRIGHT FUTURE POTENTIAL, PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

+WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT THE INDUSTRY WILL BE ABLE TO SUPPORT THE COUNTRY'S DEVELOPMENT,+ HE SAID WHEN OPENING THE MALAYSIAN TOURIST INFORMATION COMPLEX (MATIC) IN JALAN AMPANG HERE.

HE SAID THE VISIT MALAYSIA YEAR 1990 HAD ALREADY RECORDED SUCCESS BEYOND EXPECTATION WITH THE NUMBER OF TOURISTS VISITING THE COUNTRY TO-DATE, EXCEEDING THE FIGURE FOR THE WHOLE OF LAST YEAR BY 60 PER CENT.

THE ORIGINAL TARGET WAS ONLY AN INCREASE OF 10 PER CENT OVER LAST YEAR'S FIGURE, HE SAID.

HE SAID THE COUNTRY'S REVENUES HAD ALSO INCREASED WITH THE ARRIVAL OF MORE TOURISTS. -- MORE.
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DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S TARGET WAS TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF TOURISTS UNTIL THE FIGURE WAS AT PAR WITH THE COUNTRY'S POPULATION.

HE ATTRIBUTED THE INCREASE IN NUMBER OF TOURISTS RECORDED SO FAR THIS YEAR TO GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO SET UP A MINISTRY SPECIFICALLY FOR TOURISM AND RELATED SECTORS, NAMELY THE CULTURE AND TOURISM MINISTRY.

PREVIOUSLY, TOURISM WAS PLACED UNDER THE TRADE AND INDUSTRY MINISTRY WHILE CULTURE UNDER THE CULTURE, YOUTH AND SPORTS MINISTRY, HE SAID.

HE SAID WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CULTURE AND TOURISM MINISTRY, THE COUNTRY'S CULTURES HAD BEEN EFFECTIVELY PRESENTED AND IN AN ORDERLY MANNER, AND THIS ATTRACTED FOREIGN TOURISTS TO THE COUNTRY.

THE PRIME MINISTER WAS CONFIDENT THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MATIC COULD BOOST THE COUNTRY'S TOURISM INDUSTRY FURTHER AS IT HELPED PROMOTE THE COUNTRY'S CULTURES AMONG TOURISTS.-- MORE.
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CULTURE AND TOURISM MINISTER DATUK SABBARUDDIN CHIK, IN HIS SPEECH, SAID MATIC WAS SET UP ON AUG 15 LAST YEAR FOR THE BENEFIT OF TOURISTS VISITING THE COUNTRY.

UP TO JULY THIS YEAR, SOME 100,250 PEOPLE HAD VISITED MATIC FOR INFORMATION ON TOURISM AND CULTURES, HE SAID.

THE BUILDING WHICH HOUSES THE COMPLEX WAS PREVIOUSLY KNOWN AS BANGUNAN DEWAN TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN BEFORE THE CULTURE AND TOURISM MINISTRY RENOVATED IT IN 1988 FOR THE PURPOSE. -- BERNAMA.
2143MST 05 09 90