

# Provide courteous service, urges PM

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employees, entrepreneurs and the country — would benefit directly and indirectly from such courteous service.

Dr Mahathir said there might be some debate as to the merits and demerits of tourism promotion, but "on balance" the good far outweighs the bad.

"The benefits from healthy promotion of tourism are plentiful. These include employment and the increased economic bene-

fits that the income earned will bring."

Earlier, the hotel's chairman and managing director, Mr Lim Kong Wai, said the lush tropical greenery and hills surrounding the hotel separated it from the rest in Penang.

"Unlike most international hotels on the island, the Equatorial is situated away from the traditional tourist belt and close to the Bayan Lepas and Prai industrial areas.

"The hotel was planned and built during the econo-

mic slowdown a few years ago. But the vision has been amply rewarded in the form of this first-class 10-storey resort," he said.

Located 154 metres above sea level on a hill called Bukit Jambul, the hotel offers a breath-taking view of the coastline, the waterways and the Penang Bridge.

A major feature of the hotel is its 42-metre soaring atrium lobby. The focal point of this architectural wonder is two glass-backed bubble lifts.

# PM: Cater also for budget travellers

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By Ahmad A. Talib and Syed Nadzri

PENANG, Wed. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad told entrepreneurs in the tourism industry to consider building more accommodation facilities for budget travellers.

"This means there should be more motels, chalets and guesthouses, besides hotels, to meet the needs of low and medium-budget tourists," he said today.

At the official opening of the \$60 million first-class Equatorial Hotel in Bukit Jambul, Dr Mahathir said the building of more accommodation facilities for such travellers would help boost domestic tourism further.

He said the majority of domestic tourists could only afford low and medium-cost hotels. Therefore, the Government hoped the private sector would respond by building more such facilities because the demand was already there.

Dr Mahathir was accompanied by his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat, Chief Minister Dr Lim Chong Eu and other State dignitaries.

Dr Mahathir unveiled a plaque to mark the official opening of the 415-room hotel and was then taken on a brief tour of the premises.

Earlier, he was given a colourful traditional welcome.

He said the growth of domestic tourism would help promote a deeper love for the country and this could be realised if the tourism entrepreneurs heed the Government's advice on budget accommodation.

"In this respect, the Government also wishes to en-

courage more tourism interaction between Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah and Sarawak. Such kind of tourism will promote national integration."

He said tourist arrivals have been very encouraging, particular after the launch of Visit Malaysia Year.

He said that in the first eight months of this year, tourist arrivals reached 4.68 million, exceeding the 4.3 million expected for the whole year.

Dr Mahathir said the Government placed a lot of emphasis on tourism because it felt that the industry, together with the manufacturing and agricultural sectors, could help boost the national economy further.

This could be seen in the inflow of foreign exchange. For the first eight months of the year it totalled \$2.74 billion.

The Government was confident that this would exceed \$4 billion by the end of the year, he said.

"The Government has provided many facilities and incentives to promote tourism.

"However, much more needs to be done. This is necessary because the Government does not wish to see a downturn in the industry after having provided the various forms of assistance."

Dr Mahathir also advised employees in the hotel industry and other tourism-related operations to consistently provide good services to their clients and customers.

"Courteous service is part of the Malaysian way of life," he said, adding that such employees should strive to improve their efficiency at all times.

He said everyone — the

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