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MAHATHIR-TOURISM
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KUCHING, FEB 15/ (BERNAMA) -- MALAYSIA STILL LAGS BEHIND IN THE FIELD OF TOURISM COMPARED TO SEVERAL ASEAN COUNTRIES INSPITE OF THE ENCOURAGING GROWTH OF THE INDUSTRY TN THE COUNTRY, PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

-ACCORDING TO LATEST FIGURES ON FOREIGN EXCHANGE DERIVED FROM TOURISM INDUSTRY FOR ASEAN, MALAYSIA ONLY OBTAINED 13 PER CENT, COMPARED TO SINGAPORE'S 35 PER CENT AND THAILAND'S 28 PER CENT, HE SAID WHEN OPENING THE \$10 MILLION +KAMPUNG BUDAYA SARAWAK+ (A CULTURAL VILLAGE) IN SANTUBONG, 35KM FROM HERE.

THE VILLAGE, A NEW TOURIST ATTRACTION IN THE STATE, IS A PROJECT OF THE SARAWAK ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION.

HOWEVER! THE PRIME MINISTER SAID AS A NEW SERVICE INDUSTRY IN THE COUNTRY, TOURISM HAD PROVIDED SUBSTANTIAL REVENUES TO THE COUNTRY IN TERMS OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE, INCREASING TEN-FOLD FROM \$266 MILLION IN 1972 TO \$2,600 MILLIONS LAST YEAR.

THE ARRIVAL OF TOURISTS TO MALAYSIA HAD ALSO INCREASED THREE-FOLD DURING THE PAST 17 YEARS FROM 1.2 MILLION IN 1972 TO ABOUT 3.9 MILLION LAST YEAR, -- MORE.

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MAHATHIR-TOURISM 2 KUCHING

THE TOURISM INDUSTRY'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT (GNP) IS ONLY ABOUT ONE PER CENT BEFORE 1980.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE GOVERNMENT NOTICED THAT INVESTMENTS IN THE INDUSTRY AT PRESENT WERE MAINLY CONFINED TO PROJECTS IN THE FORM OF ACCOMODATION SUCH AS HOTELS, MOTELS, CHALETs AND SO FORTH.

THE GOVERNMENT HOPED THAT INVESTORS WOULD ALSO SCOUT FOR NON-ACCOMODATION PROJECTS SUCH AS RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, HE SAID.

+WE MUST PROVIDE MORE SERVICES THAT ARE CONVENIENT TO TOURISTS AS WELL AS INNOVATIVE, AND WE MUST HAVE ATTRACTIONS THAT CAN MEET THE NEED OF TOURISTS WHO ARE GETTING SOPHISTICATED BY THE DAY,+ HE SAID.

ACCORDING TO HIM, THE CULTURAL VILLAGE WAS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF NON-ACCOMODATION PROJECT AND IN THIS RESPECT, THE GOVERNMENT HOPED MORE SUCH PROJECT COULD BE CARRIED OUT NOT ONLY IN SARAWAK BUT THOROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID AS AN INDUSTRY REQUIRING BIG LABOUR FORCE, THERE WAS A NEED TO DEVELOP THE TOURISM INDUSTRY BECAUSE OF IT PROVIDED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND REDUCED UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE COUNTRY. -- MORE.

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MAHATHIR-TOURISM 3 KUCHING

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONTINUE TO PROVIDE TRAINING CONNECTED TO TOURISM IN CHANNELLING TRAINED WORKERS IN THE INDUSTRY SUCH AS THAT PROVIDED AT THE INSTITIUT TEKNOLOGI MARA AND NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY CENTRE.

ON THE VISIT MALAYSIA YEAR (VMY), HE SAID PEOPLE OF ALL WALKS OF LIFE WERE INVOLVED WHETHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY AND AS SUCH THEY SHOULD PLACE IMPORTANCE ON FRIENDLINESS AND COURTESY AS WELL AS THE WILLINGNESS TO OFFER HELP TO TOURISTS.

HE URGED MALAYSIANS TO JOIN THE AUTHORITIES IN KEEPING THEIR TOWNS, BEACHES AND TOURIST CENTRES CLEAN.

+CLEANLINESS OF OUR HOUSES AND VILLAGES WILL REFLECT OUR BEHAVIOUR, ATTITUDE AND PROGRESS,+ HE SAID.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE EFFORT TO ENCOURAGE TOURISTS TO VISIT THE COUNTRY DID NOT END WITH THE VMY THIS YEAR BECAUSE THE VMY ONLY MARKED THE START OF SUCH INTENSIVE EFFORT.

RESULTS OF THE CAMPAIGN WOULD BE SEEN YEARS AFTER THE VMY HAD ENDED AND IF MALAYSIANS HAD CARRIED OUT THE CAMPAIGN VIGOROUSLY THE PENEFFITS TO THE COUNTRY AND THE PEOPLE COULD BE FELT BEGINNING THIS YEAR, HE SAID. -- MORE.

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MAHATHIR-TOURISM 4 KUCHING

EARLIER, SARAWAK CHIEF MINISTER TAN SRI HAJI ABDUL TAIB MAHMUD SAID THE STATE GOVERNMENT WAS DETERMINED TO BRING DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESS TO 27 COMMUNITIES IN THE STATE, INCLUDING THE PENAN.

HE SAID IT WOULD ALSO ENSURE THAT IN THE PROCESS THEIR RESPECTIVE CULTURES WERE PRESERVED.

ACCORDING TO HIM, THE CULTURAL VILLAGE WAS ONE SUCH STEPS APART FROM SERVING AS A TOURIST ATTRACTION.

THE +KAMPUNG BUDAYA SARAWAK+ HAS SEVEN TYPES OF HOUSES OF COMMUNITIES IN THE STATE SUCH AS THE MALAY, CHINESE, IBAN, BIDAYUH, MELANAU, ORANG ULU AND PENAN.

THE UNIQUE FEATURE OF THE VILLAGE IS THAT THE COMMUNITIES THEMSELVES LIVED IN THESE HOUSES, CARRYING OUT THEIR TRADITIONAL AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES SUCH AS FARMING AND MAKING HANDICRAFTS.

AMONG THOSE PRESENT WERE SEVERAL ASEAN AND EC FOREIGN MINISTERS WHO ARE IN THE STATE FOR THE 8TH ASEAN-EC MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE TO BE OPENED BY THE PRIME MINISTER TOMORROW.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR AND OTHER VIPS LATER SPENT ABOUT THREE HOURS TOURING THE VILLAGE. THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO TRIED HIS HAND ON CATCHING THE FISH IN A MAN-MADE LAKE BY USING THE +JALA+ (THROWING NET) FROM A BOAT. -- BERNAMA.

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MAHATHIR - PELANCONGAN 4 KUCHING

DALAM UCAPANNYA SEBELUM ITU, KETUA MENTERI TAN SRI HAJI ABDUL TAIB MAHMUD BERKATA KERAJAAN NEGERI SEDANG BERUSAHA BERSUNGGUH-SUNGGUH MEMBAWA 27 KAUM DI NEGERI INI TERMASUK MASYARAKAT PENAN DALAM ARUS PEMBANGUNAN NEGERI.

KEBUDAYAAN MEREKA YANG PELBAGAI JUGA AKAN DIBAWA KE SATU HALUAN YANG DAPAT DIPELIHARA DAN DIBANGGAKAN, KATANYA DAN MENAMBAH PEMBUKAAN KBS ADALAH SALAH SATU LANGKAH KE ARAH ITU DISAMPING DIJADIKAN PUSAT TARIKAN PELANCONG.

KBS MENEMPATKAN TUJUH JENIS RUMAH BEBERAPA KAUM UTAMA IAITU MELAYU, CINA, IBAN, BIDAYUH, MELANAU, ORANG ULU DAN PENAN.

ANTARA MEREKA YANG HADIR PADA MAJLIS ITU IALAH BEBERAPA MENTERI LUAR ASEAN DAN KESATUAN EROPAH YANG BERADA DI SINI UNTUK MENGHADIRI PERSIDANGAN KE-8 MENTERI-MENTERI ASEAN-EC, YANG AKAN DIRASMIKAN OLEH PERDANA MENTERI ESOK.

PERDANA MENTERI DAN PARA TETAMU MENGHABISKAN MASA HAMPIR TIGA JAM MELAWAT KBS. DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SEMPAT MENCUBA MENJALAIKAN DI TASIK BUATAN, MENAIKI PERAHU +TAMBANG+ DAN MENONTON PERTUNJUKAN KESENIAN TEMPATAN.

-- BERNAMA.

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