

Efforts to boost

By **KHAIDIR ABD MAJID**

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad says the country has benefited from the concerted efforts by both the private and public sectors to put Malaysia on the international tourism map.

He cited the highly successful Visit Malaysia Year 1990 as the best illustration of the public-private sector teamwork.

Launching "Malaysia: Heart of Southeast Asia" in Kuala

Lumpur last night, he said gross receipts from tourism grew by 24.5 per cent a year during the Fifth Malaysia Plan.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir reiterated that the private sector has a vital role in promoting the tourism industry. It is, therefore, crucial that programmes and activities designed for the tourism industry which are undertaken by the private sector should complement and supple-

ment efforts by the Government, he pointed out.

He said, however, there is still much ground to be covered in promoting Malaysia as a tourist destination and in this regard, the Government's efforts will be a continuous process.

Under the Sixth Malaysia Plan, he said, the major thrust of the tourism policy is the efficient development of the sector

tourism lauded

while at the same time enhancing the quality of life of the local people.

"This policy underscores the need to increase the participation of the local people while maximising economic opportunities from tourism," he said.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir also said more books which promote Malaysia as a tourist destination should be published as they can be an effective vehicle for

such purpose.

He described tourism publication on the country as one area in which Malaysia has fallen behind its neighbours.

While there are now quite a number of books on Malaysia, they are not sufficient and are seldom designed to promote the country, he said. "Indeed, some books give an unfair picture of Malaysia," he added.

"Malaysia: Heart of Southeast Asia" boasts the works of some of the world's best photographers while the text was written by two well-known writers.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said he is encouraged that the publishers, sponsors and the book's project team had the foresight to recognise the need for a publication that appeals to the international market.