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Mahathir - Asean
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MELAKA, Sept 3, (Bernama) -- Good relations among countries in the region have made Asean the most developed and stable regional grouping in the world. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohnmad said today.

There was development and stability in the region because Asean member countries did not harbour ill intentions against one another, he added.

'We are fortunate because we live in a region where there is peace, where our neighbour has no ill intention against us and where we too have no ill intention against them,' he said when opening the Mini Asean Park in Air Keroh, near here.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said good relations among Asean countries were vital in determining security and stability in the region.

Such an atmosphere would enable development to take place in the respective Asean member countries, he added.

After opening ceremony, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir and Cabinet ministers, who are accompanying him during his two-day official visit to the state, were given a tour of the park which displays various types of houses from Asean countries.'

The houses included the '+Bahay Kubo+' from the Philippines, '+Rumah Joglo Mangkurat+' (Indonesia), '+Rumah Air Tnngkup Beloteng+' (Brunei) and '+Rumah Peranakan+' (Singapore). -- more

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Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the Mini Asean Park would enable those who had no opportunity to visit other Asean countries to learn the way of life of people in those countries.

He also said the Federal government would provide assistance to state governments in developing their tourism industries.

In this connection, he called on other state governments to 'emulate the Melaka government's efforts in attracting tourists to the state.'

He said the government's target was to attract at least 18 million tourists to 'the country annually.'

The government was giving emphasis on tourism because it involved direct flow of foreign exchange into the country for its economic growth; headed.

'For this reason, tourism is placed under a ministry. It has potential for rapid growth,' he said.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir later proceeded to Air Panas, Jasin, where he opened the Golden Valley Golf and Country Club which boasts a 58-hole golf course, reputed to be the second largest in the world.

In his speech, he said tourism projects should not merely profit-the '+taukes+' but ordinary people as well.

Since the development of the tourism industry in the country, many people had been successful. in small businesses such as restaurants and handicraft, he added.

He said the people must strive to improve themselves to be as efficient as their counterparts in other developed countries.

The 2.14-hectare country club, built by the Obayashi Corporation of Japan, offers facilities such as a hot spring bath, a 160-room hotel and a fruit garden. -- Bernama

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