

MALAYSIA AIMS TO BECOME IDEAL TOURIST DESTINATION

Mahathir - tourism

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 9 (Bernama) -- Malaysia wants to be known as a favourable but not too expensive destination for tourists, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight.

He said this could be achieved with lower cost of living in the country.

The lower cost of living would also in the long term benefit tourism operators and help the country's economy, he said when speaking at +Malam Industri Pelancongan Malaysia+ here.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said Malaysian tourism operators should not compare their charges with that in developed countries where cost of living was higher.

To impose higher charges just like in developed countries would provide short-term gain but higher costs and less profits eventually, he said.

He said cheaper tariff or rental would certainly attract tourists but poor accomodation facilities would discourage them for coming. --more.

♥09/09/20-47MST

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Mahathir - tourism 2 Kuala Lumpur (EMBARCO)

+We must ensure facilities provided will attract tourists with big and medium budget and not just back-packers with little money to spend,+ he said.

He said that if the facilities had reasonable standard the charges imposed reflecting such standard would not be considered excessive.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the tourism industry was not limited to certain years but for all time.

+As such, it's important for us not to think only of what we make today but of what we'll make in future as well,+ he said.

He said this should be given emphasise as there were those with the opinion that tourists visting the country should be +squeeze dry+.

Such opinion would bring disaster as tourists who felt that they were getting a +raw deal+ would not return and would influence others against coming here. --more.

♥09/09/21-10MST

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Mahathir - tourism 3 Kuala Lumpur (EMBARCO)

He said imposing charges too high or providing poor service would eventually lead to the decline of the industry.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the tourism industry provided most benefit to the country compared with other industries because money spent by tourists went directly and fully to country's foreign exchange earnings.

This was unlike the manufacturing industry where exports contributed only partly to foreign exchange earnings as components used in their manufacturing were imported, he said.

+Actually, tourism helps reduced our invisible trade deficit which affects our trade balance,+ he said.

He said it was also not impossible for Malaysia to have 20 million tourists visiting the country by the year 2000.

-- Bernama.