

PM's birth place to turn into tourist attraction

BANGI, Wed. -- The birth place of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in Seberang Perak, Kedah, will be turned into a tourist attraction after it has been restored.

A mosque in Merbok, also in Kedah, has also been identified for restoration.

Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik said these structures would be restored to their original state as part of the Ministry's efforts to develop historical buildings and sites into potential tourist attractions.

He added that the restoration of the Prime Minister's birth home was done in honour of his vast contributions to the country.

"We feel that it is appropriate that a statesman like Dr Mahathir be honoured for his contributions to the country.

"The people will have the opportunity to get to know their leader better once the Prime Minister's birth home



DATUK SABBARUDDIN
. original state

is restored and open to the public."

Datuk Sabbaruddin was speaking to reporters after closing the Malay Master Chess competition organised by the Malaysian Malay Chess Association and Rank Pertanian Malaysia at the bank's training institute here.

He said restoration work on these buildings would begin as soon as the Ministry

had finalised details of the project.

He added that the Ministry would continue to work with the respective State Governments to restore historical buildings and sites in its quest to develop more tourist attractions.

He said individuals and the private sector were also welcome to undertake restoration of buildings or sites deemed suitable for development as tourist areas.

"All they need to do is to contact the Ministry so that we can advise and provide the necessary facilities for them to undertake restoration of such buildings or sites.

"We are thinking of setting up a padi museum but because of financial constraints, we welcome individuals or private bodies to finance the project.

"We already have a tin museum and soon, a rubber museum. If we can have a padi museum, it will be a boon to the tourism industry."

Last July, Datuk Sabbaruddin was quoted as saying that his Ministry would restore historical buildings and sites in a big way with the increased allocation under the Sixth Malaysia Plan.

He said the Ministry had no plans to create man-made tourist sites anywhere but intended to spend money on areas with the potential of becoming a tourist attraction.

He also said the proposed Flower Parade would go on as planned in May to promote the country's flower industry.

He said May has been picked for the parade because export of flowers tended to slow down during the period.

Earlier, Datuk Sabbaruddin gave away prizes to winners of the competition.

The first prize of \$500 went to lorry driver Ahmad Rubel while second prize and third prize winners, Mohamad Ali and Mohamed Saprin Sabri, received \$300 and \$200 respectively.