

PM: Visit local areas and save foreign exchange

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KUCHING: Malaysians should spend their holidays in the country to help develop domestic tourism, said the Prime Minister.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said by visiting each other, those in the peninsula would know more about Sarawak and Sabah and those in the two states would understand the peninsula better.

This would also help the country save on foreign exchange, he said.

Opening the RM115 million Santubong Resorts near here yesterday, he said the country could not depend entirely on foreign tourists.

He said the availability of three-star and economy class hotels was vital

to promote domestic tourism as they provided more affordable rooms.

Dr Mahathir said to attract more foreign tourists, the Federal Government would spend more than RM100 million this year in promotions overseas.

About RM100 million was spent last year and RM200 million in 1991 for similar purposes.

The Prime Minister praised Datuk Ting Pek Khiing, chairman of Home and Hotels Holdings Sdn Bhd which owns Santubong Resorts, for his contributions towards domestic tourism by building budget hotels.

Dr Mahathir said he was impressed by the record time achieved by Ting in building the De-

lima Resorts in Langkawi for the previous Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace show.

In his speech, Chief Minister Tan Sri Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud said the state was ready to meet the influx of tourists for Visit Malaysia Year 1994 with the development of more hotels.

He said as Sarawak had a wide variety of attractions that could not be offered by other parts of the country, what mattered more now was how to sell Sarawak to overseas holidaymakers.

Taib said the state would soon present the report of its second tourism masterplan to the federal government for endorsement.