

# PM: Tourists our reason to smile more

**By K.P. Waran**

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. — Malaysia hopes the tourism industry will grow faster to achieve the target of one tourist per head of population by the year 2020, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said although the Government had hoped that 20 million tourists would visit the country in the year 2000, this was not possible as the current influx of tourist was about seven million a year.

He also urged Malaysians to smile and play the role of unofficial hosts to ensure that tourists have a pleasant experience here.

"Books alone are not sufficient to attract the tourists and Malaysians must make themselves unofficial hosts to everyone who comes here. All we need to do is smile.

"After all, they are contributing to the economy

and we have every reason to smile. With an 8.5 per cent growth rate and plenty of money to go around, we should be smiling even in our sleep," he said.

He was speaking during the launch of the tourist guidebook *Malaysia: Land of Eternal Summer* published by Wilmette Publications Sdn Bhd. The book is written by the husband and wife team of David and Debbie Cook.

Also present were Debbie Cook, Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik, the Ministry's Parliamentary Secretary Datuk Abdul Rahman Sulaiman and Wilmette Publications chairman Tan Sri A.P. Arumugam.

Later Arumugam presented two copies of the book to Dr Mahathir. Debbie Cook autographed both the copies.

The 344-page book was specially commissioned by Wilmette Publications and

took the authors two years to complete. The book contains tourist information and records the rich heritage, historical background and legends that are linked to some of the tourist spots.

Dr Mahathir congratulated Wilmette Publications and the authors for producing the book, which he said was timely and consistent with the Government's view that the private sector should play a bigger role in promoting tourism.

Apart from travellers, he said, even Malaysians would find the book extremely useful and interesting because it contains pictures of interesting places around the country and also historical background about these places.

He said this would help those who want to learn a little bit more about Malaysia during their travels and added that the book filled a gap in information about Malaysia.