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Sabbaruddin-Target

12.5 MILLION TOURISTS TARGETTED FOR YEAR 2000

PELABUHAN KLANG, April 27 (Bernama) -- The government has set a new target for the tourism industry for the year 2000 following the achievement of the original target six years ahead of schedule.

Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad would spell out the new target when tabling the Seventh Malaysia Plan on May 6.

The 7.2 million visitors who came to the country in 1994 yielded RM9,000 million in foreign exchange and had exceeded the target of RM8,300 million foreign exchange earnings targetted for the year 2000 in the national tourism policy, said Sabbaruddin.

"The new target for the year 2000 is 12.5 million tourist arrivals generating RM15,200 million in foreign exchange which will be explained by the Prime Minister in the Seventh Malaysia Plan," he said aboard the luxury cruise vessel "Silver Cloud" here, today.

He was launching the travel agency, Fame Equatorial Sdn Bhd, the first Anglo-Malaysian joint venture in tourism, aboard the US150 million ship which anchored at the Labuhan Star Cruise at Pulau Indah, near here.

Sabbaruddin said 8.6 million tourists were expected to come this year generating RM10,300 million in foreign exchange compared with 7.5 million tourists generating RM9,200 million in 1995.

He said all travel agencies must improve their performance to meet future challenges in complementing the government's efforts to further upgrade the tourism industry.

"In this context, the agencies must be more creative in providing various tour packages in a wider perspective which are more attractive and of better quality," he said.

He welcomed the establishment of Fame Equatorial which was the first joint-venture between a group of British investors and a bumiputera company to develop the tourism industry.

Sabbaruddin hoped the company which would lay emphasis on the promotion of eco-tourism in the North American, European, West Asian and Asian markets would provide a new dimension to the country's tourism industry, including bringing luxury tour ships to Malaysia. -- BERNAMA

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