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Aquarium

UNDERWATER WORLD IS LANGKAWI'S LATEST ATTRACTION

By: Zuhrin Ahmad

LANGKAWI, March 17 (Bernama) -- The Underwater World Langkawi, to be officially opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Tuesday, will be another crowd puller on this duty-free island resort.

Located on a 2.5ha site in Pantai Cenang, about 20km from Kuah town, it is an ambitious integrated tourism-related development project undertaken by Eden Enterprises (M) Bhd, which is under the listed Sriwani Holdings Bhd.

Managed by the Akuarium Langkawi Sdn Bhd, the centre has about 10,900 sq metres of floor space depicting over 5,000 varieties of fish and other exhibits from 500 species.

Akuarium Langkawi Communications Assistant Manager Pauline Teh said marine life such as clown fish, giant grouper, butterfly fish and trigger fish and freshwater fishes namely arowana, arapaima, cichid, goldfish, electric catfish and tetra are housed in 101 specially designed tanks.

The most impressive and unique interior architectural concept of the underwater world in the gigantic hexagonal tank and walkthrough tunnel tank.

"The hexagonal tank with a capacity of 80,000 litres of water will house shoals of exotic queen angle, damsel, clown, butterfly fish and many beautiful marine fish," she said.

Teh said the 10-metre high walkthrough tunnel tank, which contains 600,000 litres of water, features predatorial sharks, huge turtles, stingrays, moray eels, giant groupers and other spectacular fishes.

Other interesting features of the theme park are a man-made cave with cascading waterfall and a pond teeming with a myriad of colourful carps, several tanks showcasing underwater gardens of weeds and seaplants and smaller tanks with tiny inhabitants of the sea which are seldom spotted even by keen divers.

Visitors to the underwater world can also encounter an array of rare and peculiar invertebrates such as boxing and doctor shrimps, decorative and reef crabs, lobsters, sea urchins and anemones.

She said special lightings can simulate day and night conditions to show visitors the unique behavior patterns of invertebrates.

At the touch pool, visitors can touch and feel the textures of harmless creatures such as star fish, sea slugs and sea cucumbers while the poisonous fish section offers close-up views of some venomous fishes like the lion fish, scorpion fish and the deadly stone fish.

The underwater world is also a good place for learning as apart from shell displays, there is a fossil library with interesting documentations and stragetig information light boxes on water inhabitants and deep sea creatures.

Teh said educational and research programmes would be undertaken with the cooperation of the Fisheries Department and the Marine Park of Malaysia Trust Fund.

For those with a passion for shopping, there is the Zon Shopping Paradise, operated by Sriwani Duty Free Centre (Langkawi) Sdn Bhd, which is annexed to the underwater world.

She said the 10,000 sq metre shopping arcade stocks items like watches, cameras, designer apparels, jewellery, perfumes, electrical items, chocolate confectionery and other popular goods from around the world.

Chinese delicacies such as sharks fin and bird's nest servings are

available at the speciality restaurant while the Neptune Cafe fastfood outlet offers both western and local snacks.

The 1,500 capacity Eden Seafood Village Theatre will present cultural shows nightly, she said.

Teh said their target was to attract at least 30 percent of visitors to Langkawi to spend one hour at the underwater world.

About 1.8 million people visited Langkawi last year. -- Bernama

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