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Mahathir-Tourism

GOVERNMENT ACKNOWLEDGES PRIVATE SECTOR CONTRIBUTION TO TOURISM

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 17 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight the government acknowledged the contribution of the private sector in developing the tourism sector with their big and many tourism-related projects.

The prime minister said that in the government's attempt to encourage the private sector to contribute to the development of the country, pragmatic policies had been designed to support big tourism-related projects initiated by private companies.

"We acknowledge their contribution and we encourage the private sector by granting many incentives and certification and approval from the Culture, Arts and Tourism Ministry," he said when opening the RM320 million Sunway Lagoon Resort Hotel in Petaling Jaya, near here.

In addition, he said, the government was prepared to allow incentives such as Investment Tax Allowance under the Promotion of Investment Act (1986), that would cushion the initial difficulties arising from such projects in the early years of their operations.

This incentive had been extended to the 439-room Sunway Lagoon Resort Hotel, which he said had no doubt benefitted from the government's assistance.

Dr Mahathir said the tourism industry was the nation's second largest foreign exchange earner which had created other spin-off effects.

He said that apart from drawing the tourist crowds, it was also the government's hope Malaysia would be well known as a venue for world class conventions and exhibitions.

Impressed with the resort which emulates the West Edmonton Mall in Canada and adopts some of the best features of Sun City in South Africa, Dr Mahathir said the hotel and Sunway City could someday be included in his pet project, the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC), because Sunway City was separated from the MSC only by the new Shah Alam Expressway.

"The resort is situated in a strategic location as it is placed near the new growth centres like the Commonwealth Games Village, the new government administrative centre in Putrajaya and the new Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Sepang," he said.

He said these growth centres would be linked to Subang and Bandar Sunway through an extensive network of expressways, electric trains and monorails that are being constructed privately within Bandar Sunway.

"All these infrastructure will ease public accessibility to the various places, ensuring that all the strategic locations are well connected with the MSC," he said.

Dr Mahathir is confident that the resort is poised to play a significant role in attracting both local and international visitors and investors to the region.

Together with its related attractions -- the Sunway Lagoon Theme Park and the Sunway Pyramid Shopping Mall -- Dr Mahathir was confident that the ambience, the assorted themed suites and other spectacular features, would make the Sunway City township a truly unique experience in this part of the world.

The development of the resort augured well for the forthcoming Commonwealth Games which Malaysia was hosting, he said, adding that the resort would attract many visitors when it stages the bowling event of the Commonwealth Games at the adjacent pyramid shopping mall.

He also said that the resort, equipped with the latest facilities and advanced technology and the largest pillarless convention and exhibition hall in the region, was in line with the government's call to promote Malaysia as a preferred venue for international conventions and exhibitions.

The development of this facility would provide an impetus for other hoteliers and conventioners to become more competitive, thereby elevating the standard of services across the industry, he said. -- BERNAMA

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