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Mahathir-tourism

MAHATHIR:PERAK HAS VAST TOURISM POTENTIALS

SERI ISKANDAR, May 15 (Bernama) -- Perak has vast potentials for tourism which should be fully exploited to derive maximum benefits, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Speaking to reporters here he said Perak's natural beauty and abundant tourist spots, such as hot-springs, could be turned into health spas or resorts that could generate valuable foreign exchange earnings.

While hot-springs in Europe, Japan and South Korea have been turned into tourist spots and spas, many of those in Malaysia were left unexploited, Dr Mahathir lamented.

However, he was happy the state government had been taken action and attracted foreign investment to develop the hot-springs and other spots.

Earlier, the prime minister opened the Safire Pharmaceuticals (M) Sdn Bhd new factory at the Seri Iskandar Pharmaceuticals Park (SIPP) here.

Perak has 15 hot springs including one that is 25km long in Ulu Slim.

The Perak government planned to develop them into tourist resorts to boost the state tourism industry.

Dr Mahathir said it was encouraging to see that Perak was utilising disused mining land for development projects and recreational activities, such as golf courses.

"Perak has proven that it is able to transform land with little value into valuable property," he said.

This approach has helped Perak, which was previously lagging behind other states development-wise, to come to the forefront of economic growth, Dr Mahathir said.

The prime minister commended efforts by the Clearwater Sanctuary Golf Resort in Batu Gajah, which he also visited today, to turn 300 hectares of former mining land into a beautiful natural habitat.

He believed similar development could be done at other abandoned mining land in Perak and nation-wide.

This augured well for the country in terms of relocation of factories from congested industrial areas such as Selangor.

Dr Mahathir, who was on a one-day working visit to the state, expressed satisfaction with Perak's pace of industrial, educational, recreational and tourist development.

At the same news conference Dr Mahathir called on state governments to play their role in the context of the Malaysia Incorporated concept to identify obstacles to development and overcome them.

Perak Menteri Besar Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib was present.

Dr Mahathir said the country was fortunate that the three components of Malaysia Incorporated - the government, civil service and the unions -- "pull together in one direction".

In other countries organised labour and the civil service were also impediments to national development.

Organised labour in other countries misdirected energies towards undermining progress and development while the civil service was just interested in showing that it had power and was not really interested in using the power for the good of the country, he said.

Later Dr Mahathir and his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali visited Gua Tempurung in Gopeng, one of most scenic limestone caves in the country, before departing for Kuala Lumpur from Ipoh's Sultan Azlan Shah Airport.

The 1.9-km long cave is being developed over 12 years as an integrated tourist attraction costing RM650 million by Heritage Acres Sdn Bhd, a joint venture between Yayasan Perak, Malaysian Kuwaiti Investment Co Sdn Bhd and Adorna Group.

At the airport they were seen off by Ramli, his wife Raja Puan Sri Noora Ashikin Raja Abdullah, state executive councillors and senior government officials.-- BERNAMA

MR RSZ PBA RN