

27/06/1998

Langkawi to host conference on Islamic science

Saiful Azhar Abdullah

ALOR STAR, Fri. - In line with its vision of transforming Langkawi into a centre of academic excellence, the Kedah Government will hold a conference and exhibition on Islamic science and technology on the island resort in October.

It is aimed at gauging the strength of science and technology as well as research and development in the Islamic world.

The five-day Langkawi International Islamic Science and Technology Conference and Exhibition (Listec '98), the brainchild of Menteri Besar Tan Sri Sanusi Junid, is to be opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Oct 8.

Sanusi said in an interview that the conference and exhibition was aimed at establishing smart partnerships between Muslim and non-Muslims technocrats, academics, manufacturers and businessmen.

"It will focus on the establishment of better networking and partnership between Muslims and non-Muslims professionals," he said.

The conference is jointly organised by Langkawi Accommodation for Visiting Academics (Lava), Institute of Islamic Understanding (Ikim) and Eeman Consult. The New Straits Times is the official English newspaper.

The conference participants will include captains of industry and officials of several developed nations.

Information technology, bio-technology, pharmacology and medicine, agriculture, energy, advanced manufacturing, automation and robotics are among the areas to be discussed by the participants.

Sanusi said in the next millenium the Islamic and non-Islamic business communities cannot afford to live separately.

"Active and cross partnerships between them especially in the field of science and technology-based businesses will be essential.

"Towards this end, Listec can be the vehicle for identifying major players in these areas who will eventually generate vast business opportunities in the industries," he added.

He said the State Government hoped to turn Langkawi into a centre of academic excellence.

"We are blending education and tourism which is called "educato-tourism", he added.

Sanusi said generally, educato-tourism would provide nourishment to the minds and hearts of tourists.

"It goes beyond the normal conventional tour package which only provides something for the eyes. In fact, educato-tourism should offer something for all senses and encompass the interest of every member of a family," he added.

However, Sanusi said such a hope could only be realised if the operators of the tourism industry were educated and intellectual.

"And we have to begin educating these operators," he said, adding that they should have good product knowledge of the tour items.

Citing an example of how crayfish was established as a Cajun food speciality in the United States, Sanusi said in almost every restaurant, public place and airport in New Orleans, crayfish was highlighted with all kinds of recipes through books and posters making it a great delight to visitors.

"No one who goes to New Orleans will like to miss this delicacy and this is what I mean by putting an intellectual touch in our tour package.

"Therefore, I anticipate Listec and our many other academic projects, including the Langkawi International University for Tomorrow, to create a lot of academic and research spin off on the island."

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