

16 APR 1998

Sponsors

NO RESPONSE FROM SPONSORS HAMPERS TOURIST LURE EVENTS

LANGKAWI, April 16 (Bernama) -- Dismal response from sponsors in the wake of the economic downturn has taken a toll on the scheduling of major events to woo tourists to this holiday haven.

Langkawi Development Authority (LADA) general manager Datuk Abdul Halil Mutalib said many sponsors mainly from the private sector had not responded to sponsorships sought as they were operating on tight budget.

Nevertheless, 12 events have been slated for the year, he told reporters at his office, here.

He said LADA had received proposals to host a Dragon Boat Race but there was no sponsors from the private sector although Langkawi had the facilities.

Halil also expressed disappointment with certain hoteliers who prefer to conduct their own promotion drive instead of an integrated approach involving LADA, tour and travel agencies to promote Langkawi.

He said there was a need to jointly promote the island especially to untapped markets like the United States, China and West Asia.

Halil also said hoteliers have themselves to blame for the drop in occupancy rate as they had raised the room charges in good times.

They ignored the advice by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to offer the rooms at affordable prices.

This is a setback to the federal government's efforts to promote Langkawi as a premier tourist destination, he said.

When submitting plans to build a hotel, the investors price the rooms between RM50 and RM80 but after completion, they raise it from RM120 to RM160, he said.

Despite a 50 per cent reduction in room rates now, tourists would not return to the island as they have been cheated before, he added. -- BERNAMA

NH TS