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Sabah-Tourism

BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR SABAH'S TOURISM INDUSTRY

KOTA KINABALU, Feb 20 (Bernama) -- Sabah's tourism industry players are keeping their fingers crossed of seeing more international airlines flying into the state in the near future.

This was one of the hopes aired by the state's tourism operators to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad during a closed-door meeting here today.

"The Prime Minister has agreed to look into our requests particularly on increasing international flight frequencies into Sabah," said Sabah International Hotels Association chairman John Lo after the meeting.

Dr Mahathir is on a three-day visit to the state since Thursday.

Lo said the state hoped to see more direct flights from Tokyo and Osaka in Japan as well as from Sydney and Melbourne in Australia into Kota Kinabalu.

He said the state would also like to see more regional airlines making the Kota Kinabalu International Airport as a stop-over point.

Lo was confident that Sabah would see more international airlines flying into the state soon and that the state could expect to enjoy an increase in tourist revenues.

He said last year Sabah hotels only enjoyed a 38 percent room occupancy. The state has 7,200 hotel rooms to date.

Sabah recorded a total of 264,900 international tourist arrivals last year compared to 159,700 in 1997 with visitors from Taiwan topping the 1998 arrivals list with 57,300.

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