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Mahathir-Immigration

IMMIGRATION CAN HELP REVIVE ECONOMY BY BEING NICE TO TOURISTS- DR M

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 9 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today advised Immigration officers to be nice to tourists and inform them of the actual situation in the country so that Malaysia will continue to receive more visitors.

"Immigration officers have the first contact...you are the frontliners. When you are nice to foreign tourists they will have a good impression of this country," he said when addressing Immigration Department staff here.

The Prime Minister said he was impressed with the "Service With a Smile" campaign launched by the department today.

"Surely you can say Welcome to Malaysia, Have a nice day, have a nice holiday. This will create a good picture of the country. Good treatment is one of the reasons why our northern neighbours are able to attract large number of tourists despite the economic slowdown," Dr Mahathir said.

He said Malaysia's tourist industry had been affected following media reports that Malaysia was plagued by riots and demonstrations all the time.

"They deliberately picture this country as unstable....dangerous to be visited as though it is a war-torn country. Recently 600 Australian tourists cancelled their trip to Malaysia as they thought it was dangerous to visit....because CNN, CNBC and others showed the same demonstrations over and over again," he said.

Dr Mahathir said such action by the media had reduced the number of visitors to Malaysia, the come of hotels, restaurants and taxi drivers.

"Thus Immigration officers can help out by being courteous and nice to tourists. They can tell the visitors there is no problem here....no danger....no black area....all of Malayisa is a white area.. one can go anywhere," he said.

Dr Mahathir said when the economy revived everyone including public servants would benefit as the government would be able to increase their salaries and allowances.

-- BERNAMA

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