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Mahathir-Tourists

PM ENCOURAGES FOREIGN TOURISTS TO VISIT MALAYSIA

LANGKAWI, June 27 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today invited foreign tourists to take advantage of the three-in-one bargain offered by Malaysia, which is difficult to find in other countries.

"You can find elements of China, Indonesia and India and their specialities in Malaysia owing to the three major racial groups, namely Malays, Chinese and Indians," he said when launching the "Make It Langkawi" programme, here.

The programme to promote and position Langkawi as a preferred destination for holiday, meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions (Mice) for both the domestic and international tourism markets is jointly organised by Malaysia Airlines and the Langkawi Development Authority (Lada).

Dr Mahathir said tourists should also take advantage of the low exchange rates to visit Malaysia, especially Langkawi.

He said, for instance, that Japanese tourists who visit here could save about two thirds of their expenditure.

"Many tourists, notably in US, cannot believe the price of our hotels where certain five-star hotels have priced their rooms at US100 as most of the hotels there (in similar category) are priced at US500 to US1,000", he added.

Dr Mahathir said foreign media reports liked to depict Malaysia as being unstable with riots going on although it was only confined to certain areas in Kuala Lumpur for certain days.

As for diseases like Japanese Encephalitis, it was only confined to pig farms and the government had taken immediate step to control it, he added.

He said the bad publicity in Japan, Hong Kong and Taiwan highlighting the JE outbreak in Malaysia had resulted in a drop in the number of tourists from these countries.

The prime minister said Malaysia was a peaceful country where the three major races -- Malay, Chinese and Indian -- lived in harmony.

"They are so different in culture and religion but still they can sit together at the same table and are sensitive to each other on various aspects such as politics and economic development", he added.

Dr Mahathir also told foreign tour agents attending the ceremony to be rest assured that Malaysia as well as Langkawi were the best places to visit as they offered a wide variety of goods and services at good prices.

"The people here are also helpful and polite and Malaysia has a lot of attractive places to visit. Although the weather is warm but it is not too hot," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said that the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace (Lima '99) Exhibition to be held here at the end of November would be the biggest air show since the exhibition started in 1991.

A total of 97 buyers and 56 local sellers took part in the travel mart in conjunction with the programme which provides an opportunity for local hotels and resorts to meet foreign tour operators to develop tour products to cater for their specific market requirements.

-- BERNAMA

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