

01 OCT 1999

Tourism

SABAH TO TAP AMERICAN TOURISM MARKET AGGRESIVELY, SAYS CHONG

KOTA KINABALU, Oct 1 (Bernama) -- Sabah will tap the United States market aggressively to attract more American tourists, said state Minister of Tourism Development, Environment, Science and Technology Datuk Chong Kah Kiat.

"Obviously the American market is very important but we have not been able to tap it as far as Sabah is concerned," he told reporters after launching a book entitled "A Guide to The Snakes of Borneo", here today.

Chong was commenting on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's suggestion that big time US tour operators be invited over to Malaysia to see for themselves Malaysia's tourism potentials.

He said now that the prime minister has given the nod, the focus would be on promoting Malaysia, particularly Sabah, in the US.

"Previously a lot of time has been spent on marketing and promoting Malaysia in Europe and Australia," he said.

Chong defended the federal government's decision to elevate Kota Kinabalu to city status saying that the state capital would be in a better position to address various city problems, including influx of illegal immigrants.

On non-governmental organisations' criticisms of Kota Kinabalu's impeding city status, Chong said: "Of course they are free to express...I respect their views. The only thing is that we can always look at things from a positive angle, the way I look at it...we don't have to be negative."

Earlier in his speech, Chong said the publication of the book was timely to complement state government's effort in promoting Sabah's natural heritage.

The 254-page book is written by Robert B. Stuebing and Robert F. Inger.

-- BERNAMA

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