

05 AUG 1999

Tourism-Market

SARAWAK EYEING NEW TOURISM MARKETS IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

KUCHING, Aug 5 (Bernama) -- Sarawak has identified northern America, Canada, Scandanavian countries and western Europe as potential markets to boost its tourism industry in the new millennium.

Sarawak Tourism Board (STB) Chief Executive Officer Aloysius J. Dris said it had formulated strategic plans to lure more tourists from the new markets.

"Apart from that, we will continue to focus on our traditional markets such as Singapore and United Kingdom," he told reporters after the STB's "Annual Meeting With Friends in the Tourism Industry" here today.

Aloysius said the tourism industry, considered as one of Sarawak's most valuable assets, would be further expanded this year with extensive promotions in Germany through magazine supplements and roadshows.

He said the German market had increasingly become more important to Sarawak in view of the growing number of tourists arrival and business partners who are willing to assist in promotion efforts.

"Siti Zaharah gave the agreement before Khalil.

"She will not go ahead with the reshuffle, instead the status quo is maintained," said Dr Mahathir.

He said Siti Zaharah had also informed Deputy Prime Minister and Umno vice president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi by telephone tonight that she abided by the party president's advice to reverse her decision.

He said Wanita Umno had a "minor crisis" after the reshuffle was announced.

"As such, I had a discussion with the Wanita chief and she agreed that the reshuffle announced would not have led to a strengthening of the Wanita movement.

"She agreed to withdraw the new appointments and the dismissals," Dr Mahathir said.

Asked if it was the usual practice for Umno Youth and Wanita Umno chiefs to discuss with the party president concerning any reshuffle to be carried out, Dr Mahathir said Siti Zaharah might have forgotten to do so.

Asked if the Supreme Council's decision meant it interfered in Wanita Umno's affairs, he said the Supreme Council had the right to discuss anything related to the party.

"In this matter, the Wanita chief had already made her decision before the Supreme Council expressed its views and concerns in the matter, and I explained to them that the Wanita chief has cancelled her decision," he said.

Asked whether the decision was made because the two wanita leaders concerned came to see him, Dr Mahathir said that if they did not come to see him, he would still have met Siti Zaharah.

Dr Mahathir also said that the decision was made by Siti Zaharah herself after discussing it with him.

Asked whether the decision would reflect incompetency on the part of Siti Zaharah to lead the movement, Dr Mahathir said: "It is the way of Umno...we are accommodating".

On his advice to Siti Zaharah, Dr Mahathir said he hoped that she would discuss such matters with him before hand.

On whether there would be confusion among party members, especially Wanita members, on the decision reversal, he said there would be none as the leadership would explain the situation, especially to those who were

appointed in the reshuffle.

He also said there would be no reshuffle at all levels until after the general election.

-- BERNAMA

ES/SBJ THG