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## Case for eco-tourism in Malaysia

ECO-TOURISM has developed into a major industry worldwide and is continuing to show strong growth. Being endowed with rich natural resources, Malaysia too is actively promoting eco-tourism at various locations in the country.

Malaysia is one of the 12 "megadiversity" countries in the world.

Malaysia, Zaire, Brazil, Venezuela, Indonesia and several other tropical countries support 60-70 per cent of the planet's total biological diversity. Malaysia's biodiversity accounts for 15.7 per cent of the world's biological resources.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad recently urged tourism developers to practise sustainable eco-tourism and to manage our natural treasures wisely.

This is crucial to prevent deterioration and irreversible damage to the environment.

The importance of balancing environmental conservation with positive economic return is gradually being recognised by many sectors of the society.

Stricter regulations and clear guidelines by the Government, and increasing awareness among developers are changing the scenario of eco-tourism in the country.

Many realise that the goose that lays the golden egg needs to be preserved.