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Tourism

MALAYSIA TARGETS INDONESIAN TOURISTS NEXT

BINTAN, June 12 (Bernama) -- After launching a promotion blitz in Singapore, Malaysia will next target Indonesia in moves to attract visitors from neighbouring countries as an immediate boost to its tourism industry.

"Right now, our focus is on countries that will bring in the numbers fast, from Asean, namely Singapore, Indonesia and Thailand, and other countries such as China and India," said Malaysia's Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir.

Abdul Kadir said Indonesia was a potential leading market for Malaysia given its large population and proximity to Malaysia.

"Indonesia has 220 million people and no matter what the circumstances, at least 10 per cent can still afford to travel. That is already the size of Malaysia's population," said Abdul Kadir who left here last night after a two-day visit to Batam and here.

Despite the lack of promotion, he said a sizeable number of Indonesians have been visiting Malaysia.

Last year, a total of 307,373 Indonesians visited Malaysia, making them the fourth biggest market behind Singapore, Thailand and Japan.

Abdul Kadir said a promotion campaign in Indonesian newspapers and television would be launched soon, similar to the weekly supplements in Singapore's leading Straits Times newspaper and television.

Abdul Kadir said he would lead a delegation to Jakarta next week with stopovers in Surabaya and Jogjakarta.

"I'm sure many questions on flights and visa matters will be raised. These have to be looked into," he said.

Abdul Kadir said the question of increasing flight frequencies between the two countries was discussed during Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's last visit to Jakarta.

The problem of flights was also raised during Abdul Kadir's stopover in Batam.

Batam tourism authorities requested him to look into the possibility of restarting flights between Kuala Lumpur and Batam after the previous service managed by Indonesia's Sempati Air ceased several years ago.

Batam officials said that the Indonesian island was known mostly only to Malaysians staying in Johor but not to those from other states.

-- BERNAMA

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