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Tours good for schoolchildren

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MALACCA, Sat. - The National Union of the Teaching Profession has lauded Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's suggestion that the Culture, Arts and Tourism Ministry organise more group tours for schoolchildren to enable them to appreciate their heritage and the country's history.

Its president Abu Bakar Shawkat Ali said only through such arrangements could the students gain better understanding of the country's diverse cultures and tourist attractions.

He said tours were normally organised by schools during the weekends or holidays.

"However, some of these tours are not properly organised," he added.

"There were also cases where parents claimed that the bus fares for the tours were too expensive.

"With the ministry's help, I believe more organised and well-planned packages at reasonable rates could be arranged for students, especially those who come from poor families."

By exposing them to their heritage, Abu Bakar believed that the young could contribute significantly to the tourism sector when they grow up.

Last night, Dr Mahathir, when launching the Malacca Tourism Festival 2000 at Persiaran Kuala Lumpur City Centre said in Japan, for instance, children were taken in groups not just to historical places, but also supermarkets and shopping complexes.

The Prime Minister said such tours could help cultivate a love for the country.

Dr Mahathir added that this should be the focus of the ministry's programme.

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