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Kadir-Tourism

GOVT TO HELP BOOST DIVE-TOURISM- ABDUL KADIR

KUALA LUMPUR, May 25 (Bernama) -- More jetties will be built and existing ones upgraded to cater for the increasing number of dive-tourists coming to Malaysian shores, Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir said today.

He said allocations had been made under the 8th Malaysian Plan for the jetties and other infrastructure projects.

"Diving sports is becoming more popular and we will spend money to boost the sports," he told a press conference after opening the Asia Dive Expo (ADEX) 2001, at the Mines Exhibition Centre, here.

He said in Malaysia there were many diving spots such as in Sabah, Terengganu, Pahang and Kedah.

"We are planning to develop facilities on islands off these states to attract more tourists especially divers," he said.

Meanwhile, Malaysian Sports Diving Association (MSDA) President Mukriz Mahathir said over 30,000 dive-tourists visited Malaysian shores every year and spent an average of RM88.5 million.

Last year, Sabah alone contributed RM50 million in dive-tourist receipts -- a significant 10 per cent contribution to the total tourist receipts for the year.

"This clearly shows that dive-tourism is growing into a big revenue earner for the Malaysian economy," he said.

Responding to a question, he said the average stay of each diver ranged from eight to 10 days and some even extended to two weeks.

He also said 60 per cent of divers spent between RM3,500 and RM4,000 during each stay while 40 per cent between RM2,000 and RM3,500 per person.

Mukriz said most divers came from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Japan and of late the United States and Europe.

"More than 350 Malaysians have already traded in their laptops and briefcases for dive computers and depth gauges and a licence to teach scuba diving," he added.

He also said the association would continue to promote diving as a safe and fun-filled recreational sport among Malaysians and expatriates living in the country.

"The association will also like to create more and better awareness about the need to conserve the marine environment," he said.

A total of 88 exhibitors from 22 countries is taking part in the expo to present the latest innovative and trendy products, as well special packages of dive destinations.

The three-day show is endorsed by the Dive Equipment and Marketing Association (DEMA) and hosted by Tourism Malaysia and supported by MSDA.

The expo is open to the public and admission is RM3 for those without invitation cards.

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