

09 APR 2001

PATA-KADIR

TAKE HOLIDAYS, BOOST TOURISM INDUSTRY, SAYS KADIR

KUALA LUMPUR, April 9 (Bernama) -- The domestic and regional tourism industry would be greatly boosted if there was a change in the mindset of the masses, where taking a vacation is seen as a necessity, said Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister, Datuk Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir.

There is a great potential for tourism in Asia Pacific and the challenge for the industry is to persuade the 3.8 billion people in Asia Pacific to go for holidays and not regard the "holiday culture" as something of an extravagance, he said in his opening address at the 50th Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) annual conference, here today.

The conference was officiated by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad. Among those in the event were PATA chairman, M.P. Bezbaruah and chief executive officer Joseph Mc Inerney.

Kadir, who is also the chairman of PATA 2001 National Host Committee, said PATA provided its members and other stakeholders in the travel and tourism industry, a channel for close collaboration.

"The association has encouraged the development of adequate passenger transportation services and facilities, in addition to facilitating the sharing of information among its members which are key factors that have contributed to the successful development of tourism in the region," he said.

PATA has also brought the public and private sectors closer through fostering constructive dialogue sessions, and these efforts in turn, have largely facilitated productive investments in tourism, he said.

Describing the country's beauty as a tourism asset, he said Malaysia also offered international visitors multi-faceted attractions with its multi-racial and multi-cultural backdrop.

In tourism, he said the word competition did not exist as Malaysia had always attracted people to come to the country and at the same time encouraged them to visit the neighbouring countries.

He added that the Malaysian government had gone all out to help the private sectors in ensuring that their investments in tourism provided good paybacks.

The attractions of the country, together with the support provided by the government to the industry, has made the tourism sector an important pillar for the Malaysian economy, he said. -- BERNAMA

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