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Sabah-Interior

AGRI PARK IN TENOM, FOCAL POINT TO SABAH'S RURAL TOURISM

TENOM, May 2 (Bernama) -- The Sabah Agriculture Park, near here, is to become the focal point in efforts to turn the state's interior districts as a zone for eco-tourism, Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Paduka Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir said today.

"This is the most beautiful agriculture park I've seen in the country and it has all the potentials to be among the best in the world," he told reporters after visiting the 500ha park today.

He said the park provided enough attractions and uniqueness to become the main tourism product that would lead the growth of other attractions already in place in the proposed zone comprising Tambunan, Keningau and Tenom districts.

The only problem hampering the effort was accessibility because a large part of the proposed zone could be reached only after hours of driving at the long and windy Kota Kinabalu-Tenom road, he said.

"This problem has been identified and I was told that a project to tar the Keningau-Kimanis alternative route has been approved. Once this road is completed, it will only take less than two hours to reach here," he said of the logging track.

Among the attractions in the park are the orchid centre which is the biggest in Borneo with some 400 species of local orchids, the Garden of Eden comprising exotic plants as well as the evolution farm containing replicas of pre-historic plants and its evolutions.

The park was opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in March 2001.

Kadir said Sabah was well-known for its picturesque interior but unlike in Tenom and its neighbouring districts, some of the attractions such as the Danum Valley in Lahad Datu, are located far from the state capital.

"Upon completion of a shorter access road, the proposed zone for eco-tourism in the state's interior will be the choicest option," he said.

Besides the agriculture park, Tenom also offered various attractions such as the Murut cultural village, white-water rafting, 14-level Kalong waterfall and several historical sites.

-- BERNAMA

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