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Rainforest

SPECIAL MAS PACKAGE FOR RAINFOREST MUSIC ENTHUSIASTS

KUCHING, Aug 26 (Bernama) -- The Sarawak Tourism Ministry is collaborating with Malaysia Airlines (MAS) to attract rainforest music enthusiasts worldwide through the introduction of a special package for next year's Rainforest World Music Festival.

Sarawak Tourism Minister Datuk Seri Abang Johari Tun Abang Openg said that the ministry, through the Sarawak Tourism Board (STB), would be promoting the package, covering air fare, hotel accommodation and entrance tickets to the festival, on all MAS international flights.

"With the support of corporate organisations like MAS, we expect the number of visitors to next year's music festival to increase by 50 per cent from 17,000, including 60 per cent foreigners at this year's event," he told a news conference here today.

He said the Rainforest World Music Festival 2004, to be held at the Sarawak Cultural Village (SCV) at Santubong here from July 9-11, would coincide with the Eco-Bio Tourism Year 2004 of the state, which is one of 12 mega biodiversity spots in the world.

The STB was now designating its representatives worldwide to other international music festivals such as in Madrid to scout for new groups to perform at next year's event, he said.

In conjunction with the event, he said the second International Ethnic Music Conference would be held at the Sarawak Tourism Complex here to focus on the relationship of ethnic music with the traditions and cultures of communities worldwide. Musical folk dramas will also be staged.

Abang Johari said the Food and Fruits Fiesta would also be held at the SCV to enable visitors, especially foreigners to sample Sarawak food and delicacies as well as fruits.

With the success of this year's music festivals as well as other international events being held here, in conjunction with "Visit Sarawak Year" and the state's ruby jubilee celebrations of independence, he was confident the upward trend in tourist arrivals would be sustained.

Sarawak recorded 1.7 million tourist arrivals in the first six months of this year despite the SARS outbreak, he said.

He was also optimistic that the publicity generated from the bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Indonesian President Megawati Suparnoputri here on Thursday would promote Kuching as a future venue for meeting, incentive, convention and exhibition (MICE) facilities.

-- BERNAMA

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