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Tourism-ATF

ASEAN+3 TOURISM MINISTERS MEET TO BOOST TOURISM COOPERATION

LANGKAWI, Jan 25 (Bernama) -- Asean tourism ministers are meeting here today with their counterparts from the Asean+3 dialogue partners -- China, Japan and South Korea -- to step up tourism cooperation in the region.

Their meeting, part of the nine-day 24th Asean Tourism Forum (ATF) which opened on Jan 21 at the officials level, is expected to give a lift to the tourism industry in countries still recovering from the psychological damage inflicted by the Dec 26 tsunami.

Asean is represented by all its member countries -- Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

This year's forum, carrying the theme "Shifting Paradigm -- Prospering the Region", is attended by more than 1,000 participants who include government officials, representatives of tourism associations, buyers and sellers of products and services, and the media from more than 50 countries.

This is the fifth time Malaysia is hosting the forum, after 1981, 1987, 1992 and 1997.

The ATF this year is sponsored by Tourism Malaysia, the Tourism Ministry, Malaysia Airlines, Malaysian Association of Hotels (MAH), Malaysian Association of Travel and Tour Agents (MATTA), Asean Tourism Association (ASEANTA), the Kedah government and Langkawi Development Authority (LADA).

Tonight, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi will officially open ATF 2005 at Dataran Lang (Eagle Square).

Tomorrow, the Asean Tourism Conference organised by ASEANTA will be held at the Mahsuri International Exhibition Centre (MIEC) to discuss strengthening cooperation among member countries to achieve greater prosperity.

Former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad is scheduled to make the keynote address entitled "Travel and Tourism -- Bonding Asean for Greater Prosperity" at the conference.

Meanwhile, about 400 international buyers of tourism products and services are expected at the Asean Travel Exchange (Travex) exhibition which will be held for two days from tomorrow.

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