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All out to promote tourism in FTs

THE Federal Territory Ministry has drawn up plans to work closely with the Tourism Ministry to further promote tourism development in the federal territories of Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya City and Labuan.

So far, Deputy Federal Territory Minister Datuk Zulhasnan Rafique said, tourism matters were handled by the Kuala Lumpur Tourism Action Council which received RM1 million annually for Kuala Lumpur while Labuan and Putrajaya were left to fend for themselves.

Zulhasnan said Kuala Lumpur is recognised as the main gateway to Malaysia and many important events are held in the capital city. More signature events are in the pipeline to further enhance the city's potential as a tourist destination.

He was speaking last Monday after a luncheon hosted by Kuala Lumpur City Hall for ministers, delegates and the media attending the Asean Tourism Forum (ATF 2005), from Jan 21 to 29 at the Andaman Resort in Langkawi.

He said as the Grand Prix City (declared two years ago), KL will feel the F1 fever for a week when the prestigious race is held at the Sepang International Circuit (SIC) from March 18 to 20.

He said on-going discussions will be held for the two ministries to work together including the setting up of a special committee for the purpose. KL will also be further marketed as a venue for MICE (meetings, incentives, conventions and expositions) especially with the opening of the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre (near the Petronas Twin Towers) by mid-2005.

He added that Tourism Minister Datuk Dr Leo Michael Toyad has agreed in principle to give bigger allocations for tourism development to the three FTs - especially Putrajaya and Labuan.

SIC chairman Datuk Mokhzani Tun Dr Mahathir said the F1 is a crowd puller and efforts are being made to persuade the 'high-rollers' and tourists who come for the race to stay a bit longer.

Mokhzani said discussions are being held by industry players to have pre- and post-event tours that would benefit the tourism industry as a whole. Among the places being promoted are Langkawi, Penang and Pangkor Laut.

He said an F1 Gala dinner will be held in conjunction with the race. It will be attended by creme de la creme of Malaysia, as well as invited foreign guests. Part of the dinner proceeds will go to the Dec 26 tsunami disaster fund.

(END) Source : New Straits Times