

'Portray Malaysia truthfully'

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KOTA KINABALU: The tourism industry must portray Malaysia truthfully in promotional materials so that visitors do not feel duped.

Tourism Minister Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor said his ministry had received feedback from travel

agents abroad, particularly in Britain, that the scenario in Malaysia did not reflect what was portrayed in the promotional photographs and VCDs.

Declining to give details, Tengku Adnan said the advertisements were more impressive than the reality.

"Of course, the tourists were disappointed. We must remember that they expected an

experience of a lifetime here in Malaysia," he said during a dialogue with tourism players here yesterday.

Tengku Adnan said there were fewer than 200,000 visitors from Britain a year whereas Singapore received as many as 460,000 and Thailand 600,000 in the same period.

He said hotels and homes-

tays should provide good service and deliver what they had promised in the tour packages.

Later at a press conference, Tengku Adnan said discussions were being held to introduce more direct flights to Kota Kinabalu through Tiger Air, Cebu Pacific and other airlines.

"The goal is to make Kota

Kinabalu the regional hub of the Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East Asean Growth Area."

He added that the effort had to take a back seat for now as expansion work at the Kota Kinabalu International Airport was an obstacle.

"Last month, 60 chartered flights from China, Japan and West Asian countries had to be

cancelled as they wanted to land at night. With the construction work going on, this was not feasible.

"Once the expansion is completed, we can start wooing them again."

Tengku Adnan added that up to May this year, the Immigration Department recorded about 10.6 million visitors to Malaysia.