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## PM: Tourism will benefit economy

LANGKAWI: Malaysia needs to focus on its services sector, especially tourism, to drive its economy and achieve a six per cent growth annually in the next 10 years, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

He said Malaysia needed to cut down its dependency on the manufacturing sector, which has been its main economic sector.

Studies had shown that in the years to come, developed countries would see slower economic expansion, he said.

This meant the manufacturing sector would also not see high growth, since the main market for Malaysia's exports were in the developed countries, he said.

"The tourism sub-sectors would be most important in driving up the economy.

"The sub-sector is of the utmost importance to the government. That is why tourism is among the 12 national key economic areas," he said at the official opening of The Danna Hotel, owned by Tradewinds Corporation, here yesterday.

Najib said the middle class in India and China had reached 900 million people and Malaysia should ensure that this segment viewed Malaysia as a choice tourism destination when they travelled.

"We must implement a strategy for the middle class of China, India and Southeast Asia so that they will choose Malaysia and Langkawi as their tourist destinations. There is great potential in tourism.

"We believe that to push tourism, there would have to be products that are attractive for tourists. Langkawi has a lot of attractions, - among which is ecotourism."

He said the government wanted the private sector to be the real engine of growth while the government facilitated with the provision of incentives, support and assistance.

"The private sector will drive the economy."

The government's aim was to create more Bumiputera entrepreneurs who were successful in the open market, he said. — Bernama