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Malaysia intensifies initiatives on luxury tours

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MALAYSIA must intensify further plans, preparations and implementation of various initiatives to attract more mass tourists and luxury travellers, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Najib Razak.

He said this is in line with the latest trend in the tourism sector which focuses on elite tourism.

Quoting the report from "The World Travel Monitor", in 2014 the world population undertook 46 million international luxury trips.

"I am certain that by adopting this measure, we can derive much benefits for the local entrepreneurs and population by creating various job opportunities besides generating the local economy which promises good returns.

"They include hire-car, handicrafts, food and drinks, textile and clothing where entrepreneurs will enjoy the spillover benefits from the considerable expenditure by the luxury and mass tourists," he said in his blog, *NajibRazak.com*.

In 2015, Malaysia received 25.7 million tourists who generated RM69.1 billion in income for the country.

On average, Malaysia suc-



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ceeded in raising the expenditure by each tourist to about RM2,600 which also benefitted the local community.

Touching on the St Regis Langkawi hotel which was officially opened by Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah yesterday, Najib said it is part of the strategy to upgrade Langkawi into a destination of choice for the tourists worldwide.

"It also signifies investors' confidence on the Malaysian economy and government," said Najib who hopes that there will be more Indonesian

investments in Malaysia which would lead to integration and strengthening of the economy of both countries.

The prime minister pointed out that St Regis Langkawi is a success story in terms of joint-planning by the government agencies on tourism.

"I am happy when told that 80% of the total workers here, for example, comprise the people of Kedah themselves," said Najib.

He emphasised that Langkawi clearly has the potential to emerge as one of the leading international tourist destinations with its apparent unique-

ness and beauty and is an attraction to travellers from all over the world.

The federal government, he said, will continue to cooperate with the Kedah state government in transforming and developing the island.

In order to enter a new phase, Najib said tourism in Langkawi needs development that encompasses several aspects including the provision of a yachting hub of international standard and a world-class marina.

It also needs a location for organisations of international conventions, sporting and musical events, duty-free shopping centre besides a site for a park as well as cultural beauty.

Najib said initiatives to promote Langkawi must continue to be carried out including increasing the airline network such as the Langkawi-China direct flight which has already started.

"*Insyah-Allah* (God willing) our aspiration to turn Langkawi as the "Riviera of Asia", which is not only capable of competing but also becoming much better than the leading rivieras in Europe, can be achieved," he added.

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