

# PM: TOURISM TO UNDERGO DIGITALISATION

**Digitalisation will provide better connectivity, boost industry, says Dr M**

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Malaysia will embark on a digitalisation journey to transform its tourism industry.

This will be undertaken through smart-tourism initiatives, said Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said digitalisation would provide the necessary tools for the industry to be globally connected, perform rigorous data analyses of tourism futures and shorten the supply chain.

He said for this to materialise, a new investment climate was crucial for a conducive environment to enable the technology-centred tourism industry to charge for-

ward. Investment needed to be balanced.

"Policies need to allow for investment incentives in more intangible products, such as data acquisition, content creation and online platform presence."

Dr Mahathir said this in his keynote address when launching the World Tourism Conference (WTC) 2019 here yesterday.

Present were Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister Datuk Mohamadaddin Ketapi and World Tourism Organisation executive director Zhu Shanzhong.

Dr Mahathir said tourism stakeholders were venturing into sharing the economy, digital platform and social media integration, as well as big data analytics, to customise tourism offerings to specific demographics.

Digitalisation was crucial because technological advancements had led consumers to utilise mobile devices and online platforms to access information, arrange, book and plan their holidays, he added.

Dr Mahathir said specific incentives were being formulated



Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad being greeted by Malaysian ambassador to Vietnam, Datuk Shariffah Norhana Syed Mustaffa, at the Noi Bai International Airport in Hanoi yesterday. He is in Vietnam for a three-day official visit. BERNAMA PIC

to attract hard infrastructure investment and technology-based investment in the tourism sector.

"The effects of the Fourth Industrial Revolution on digitalisation, automation and artificial intelligence have also impacted tourism."

He said according to the World Economic Forum's Digital Transformation Initiatives, digitalisation in tourism was expected to contribute up to US\$305 billion (RM1.3 trillion) by 2025.

He said it would generate benefits valued at US\$700 billion for businesses and societies.

He said tourism should be the catalyst to environmental protection, preservation and conservation of local culture and heritage.

This, he believed, would ensure

the wealth from tourism was spread widely to reach even remote communities that offered unique experiences to tourists.

"One area where this can be achieved is through sustainable eco-tourism development.

"Eco-tourism is a high-value sub-sector that offers genuine experiences and adventures that are unique to a particular locality. Due to its scarcity, it has the potential to become a premier destination, bringing in high-value tourists."

He said technology incentives for eco-tour package developments, eco-resort building designs and innovative business processes could be considered by governments and implemented by destination managers and

tour operators.

"Within the context of Malaysia, we are blessed with our more than 130-million-year-old rainforests, beaches, islands, natural wonders and national parks, and the diversity of our people.

"This has positioned Malaysia as a preferred eco-tourism destination. Through our National Eco-tourism Plan 2016-2025, we are developing cluster-based destinations and inculcating the use of technology."

He said the government was committed to exploring new avenues through technology and smart-destination management.

Themed "Beyond Tourism — Beyond Expectations", the fifth edition of the three-day WTC will end tomorrow.