

# Special zones to attract tech investments in tourism

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysia will designate Special Tourism Investment Zones nationwide to attract more infrastructure and new technology-based investments, says Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

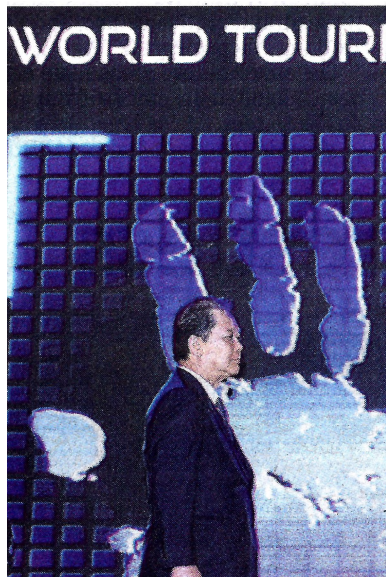
The Prime Minister said the zones that come under the National Tourism Policy will get specific incentives to attract investments.

"Malaysia realises that technology advancement in tourism is about to break boundaries and open up infinite opportunities for growth globally," he said in his opening speech at the World Tourism Conference here yesterday.

Also present was Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister Datuk Mohamaddin Ketapi.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia wanted to embrace digital technology to transform the nation's tourism industry.

As such, the country is embarking on a comprehensive digitalisation journey to transform the industry towards smart tourism initiatives in line with the Fourth



Industrial Revolution.

By embracing digitalisation, the government believes that it will be able to provide the necessary tools for the tourism industry to be internationally connected, gain the ability to perform rigorous analytics to predict future tourism trends and shorten the supply chain, said Dr Mahathir.

He added that a new investment climate was pivotal for a conducive environment to enable a technology-centred tourism industry to charge forward.

"Investment in hard and soft infrastructure needs to be balanced.

"National policies need to allow



**Exchanging ideas: Dr Mahathir, Mohamaddin and World Tourism Organisation executive director Zhu Shanzhong (right) attending the World Tourism Conference in Kuala Lumpur.**

for investment incentives in more intangible products such as data acquisition, content creation and online platform presence," said Dr Mahathir.

He said that according to the World Economic Forum's Digital Transformation Initiatives, digitalisation in tourism is expected to contribute up to US\$305bil (RM1.28 trillion) of value through increased profitability by 2025.

Dr Mahathir also said with the arrival of tourists forecast to reach 1.8 billion in 2030, Malaysia could foresee a wider base of services being offered beyond the conven-

tional tourism-focused industry.

This includes medical services, filming, adventure sports, content development, religious activities, gaming, as well as green technology, he added.

Tourism, Arts and Culture Ministry secretary-general Datuk Isham Ishak said the investment zones were important as Malaysia wanted to move away from the traditional way of promoting tourism.