

Najib Launches Masterplan To Boost Langkawi Tourist Arrivals

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LANGKAWI, March 30 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak on Sunday launched the Perdana Quay Development Masterplan here and expressed the hope to see three million annual tourist arrivals to this legendary island, injecting RM3.8 billion into the economy.

He said tourism was a key element of the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) to turn Malaysia into a high-income nation by the year 2020.

"I want to see three million tourist arrivals here each year, bringing RM3.8 billion into the economy and creating at least 4,200 new jobs for Malaysians," he said at the launch.

Najib said that six years from now, the government wanted to welcome 36 million tourists to Malaysia and collect RM168 billion in receipts annually - or more than RM3 billion per week.

"It is an ambitious target, yes, but we are well on the way to reaching it. This year alone, 28.8 million people are set to visit Malaysia, an increase of 12 per cent on last year.

"We are now the second most-visited destination in all of Southeast Asia," he said.

Najib also said that tourism contributed to an ever-growing share of the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), a share that was expected to reach about 12.5 per cent this year.

"For thousands of years, travellers from around the world have found themselves captivated by the natural beauty and fascinating culture of these islands.

"But it is only in the past quarter of a century, since (former prime minister) Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad recognised Langkawi's incredible potential as a tourist destination that it has truly become the Jewel of Kedah.

"Today, it gives me great pleasure to continue that transformation, as we break ground on Tradewinds Corporation's new Perdana Quay development. When complete, this RM4-billion resort will be one of the finest in the world," Najib said.

Also present at the launch were Najib's wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, Dr Mahathir and his wife, Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, and Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mukhriz Tun Dr Mahathir.

Najib said it might be hard to imagine when looking around the site today, but in less than four years a visitor to Perdana Quay would experience the ultimate in luxury with a five-star hotel and a collection of ultra high-end shops.

"The tourists are not just arriving in greater numbers than ever before, they are also spending more while they are here. In 2013, each tourist spent an average of more than RM2,500 during their stay, an increase of 5.2 per cent on the previous year.

"This did not happen by chance. Over the years we have focused our efforts on attracting high-end luxury tourists, improving our attractions and services and enhancing connectivity to priority markets.

"Key to the continued growth of high-end tourism is Langkawi Permata Kedah. In 2011, I launched the Langkawi Tourism Blueprint, a five-year plan to make this resort island as popular as the Seychelles, Mauritius and the Maldives," he said.

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