

## **PM Wants Langkawi to be 'Monaco of The East'**

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LANGKAWI, Dec 18 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak wants more effort be put in to turn Langkawi as a high-nett worth tourist destination in the region.

Speaking during the Langkawi Tourism Awards 2015 ceremony at the Langkawi International Convention Centre (LIICC) here tonight, he said efforts to turn Langkawi as the "Monaco of the East" for well-heeled tourists should be done while maintaining its attraction for mass tourism.

"I would like to see Langkawi emerge as the 'Monaco of the East' for high nett worth tourists, while maintaining its appeal for mass tourism. I would like to see two-tier development for Langkawi, one for mass tourism and another one for high-nett worth tourists," he said .

He said turning Langkawi as a high-end tourist destination for deep-pocketed tourists would spur numerous multiplier effects to the local economy such as creating high-paying jobs.

According to the Prime Minister, there are pockets of high-end tourist destinations in Langkawi such the St Regis luxurious hotel, but the development for that kind of destinations need to enhanced and be overall.

Langkawi's St Regis hotel, known for its luxury rooms and facilities, he said will open its door to customers in April next year, bringing along a Michelin-star restaurant to the island.

It will be the first Michelin-star restaurant in Langkawi.

The Prime Minister was also hopeful that the responsible parties would develop stronger brands for Langkawi, to put the island in the same league as Bali, which is more recognisable among tourist as compared to Indonesia's capital, Jakarta.

Another of Langkawi's plus point that needed to be portrayed among tourists Najib said, was that the island is peaceful, secure and safe from disturbances, which engulfed other tourist destinations in other parts of the world.

The Prime Minister cited terrorist attacks suffered by other tourist destinations like what happened in Sharm-el Sheikh in Egypt, Lebanon, Tunisia and other places.

"Langkawi should remain peaceful, safe and secure and efforts should be made to maintain it," he said and in jest added that he hoped that there were no supporters of the so called Islamic State (IS) militant or Daesh terrorists in Langkawi.

Najib also hoped the authorities would put in more effort to attract Russian tourists.

Also present were the Chief Executive Officer of Langkawi Development Authority Tan Sri Khalid Ramli and Secretary-General of the Treasury, Ministry of Finance (MOF), Tan Sri Dr Mohd Irwan Siregar Abdullah.

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