

NEW STRAITS TIMES

Island set to see robust development with launch of RM5b plan by prime minister

December 9, 2011

LANGKAWI is set to usher in a second wave of tourism investments with the launch of a five-year tourism road map by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak yesterday.

The Langkawi Tourism Blueprint, which envisages RM5 billion investments in tourism projects, aims to raise annual tourist arrivals to the island to three million by 2015 from two million currently.

This would create an additional 4,200 jobs in the tourism industry and raise tourism receipts to RM3.8 billion from RM1.8 billion.

“Langkawi’s success up until now has been great. But we need to have a strong branding for Langkawi,” Najib said.

“We also need to ensure that while we develop, we take care of the environment.

“For Malaysia to continue being a choice destination for tourists, we need to take in hand certain issues, including the need to develop our tourism products, especially the more interesting and iconic ones, and go for more focused promotions.”

Tourism is one of the 12 National Key Economic Areas under the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP). Last year, the sector contributed RM56.5 billion from 24.6 million tourist arrivals.

The blueprint is the second phase of the development plan for Langkawi, with the first begun by Najib’s predecessor, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

“In the 1980s, when (Dr Mahathir) declared Langkawi a duty-free island, Langkawi went through a tremendous growth spurt.”

The blueprint will have 14 initiatives under three themes — product, infrastructure and enablers.

Among the key elements of the blueprint are: Promoting the island’s iconic spots, such as the Langkawi Geopark, Pulau Dayang Bunting and Gunung Machinchang.

Langkawi Tourism Boom – New Straits Times, Dec 2011

Building five five-star hotels to target highnet-worth tourists.

SETTING UP a park ranger team to ensure the conservation of tourist spots;

IMPROVING infrastructure in tourism areas to create a good first impression;

SETTING UP a tourism academy, a collaboration between the Higher Education Ministry and Taylor's University;

IMPROVING air services and providing incentives for chartered flights to Langkawi, improving land transport services and providing a clean environment; and,

INTENSIFYING promotional efforts to make Langkawi a meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions destination.

Najib said the increase in tourist arrivals would more than double the island's contribution to the nation's gross national income, from RM800 million to RM1.9 billion.

He said that out of the RM5 billion, the government had allocated RM420 million under the 2012 Budget to undertake infrastructure development while the balance would come from the private sector.

Najib ordered the Langkawi Development Authority (Lada) to clean up Pantai Chenang Langkawi was recently recognised in National Geographic's top-10 list of premier beaches in the world.

It was also declared a geopark by Unesco in 2007 Present at the launch of the blueprint were Second Finance Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Husni Mohamad Hanadzlah, Tourism Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ng Yen Yen and Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Azizan Razak.