

'Spend locally to hasten economic recovery'

JOHOR BARU: Malaysia's economic recovery could be accelerated if locals spent more money locally instead of travelling abroad for holidays, said **Chief Statistician Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin**.

He said local tourism also generated financial flow faster and had a direct impact on every downstream sector.

Mohd Uzir also noted the value of domestic tourism amounted to RM93bil in 2019 with more than three million tourism industry workers employed before the pandemic.

Meanwhile, he said Malaysians used to spent RM40bil to RM50bil outside the country before Covid-19.

"This is a huge amount of money that we could use to help our local businesses.

"For example, if the Top 20% (T20) income group spends their money in the local grocery store or tourism industry, they could help in creating job opportunities in those sectors as it creates demand for those services," he said when contacted by The Star yesterday.

Mohd Uzir also pointed out there were more than 196 tourism industries in the country which generated between RM80bil and RM90bil in inbound tourism receipts before the pandemic.

"Malaysia used to attract about 29 million tourists every year (before Covid-19). Every other country outside is currently busy promoting their tourism products as it is the fastest way to generate income.

"Even the National Recovery Council (NRC) is proposing that the government opens our international borders for foreign visitors next year," he said.

He added the current issue now is the labour shortage in hotels due to the influx of tourism activities.

Mohd Uzir said many who used to work in hotels had ventured into other sectors and it might take a while for those positions to be taken up again.

Meanwhile he said Malaysians needed to play their role by following standard operating procedures imposed by the government to ensure the number of infections remain low.

"We have to play our role as responsible citizens if we want our economy to recover and to generate job opportunities," he added.

<https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2021/11/27/spend-locally-to-hasten-economic-recovery>