

### **Tourism operators to get another RM3,000 aid**

THE Tourism, Arts and Culture Ministry (Motac) is expected to provide another one-off assistance of RM3,000 to tourism operators licensed under the ministry as a stimulus or to kick-start their business.

The financial assistance is one of the government's initiatives under the National People's Well-Being and Economic Recovery Package (PEMULIH) to assist the tourism sector which was one of the most affected segments during the Covid-19 crisis.

"This is the second time assistance given to the tourism operators through the People and Economic Strategic Empowerment Programme (PEMERKASA) which has provided financial aid of RM3,000 to eligible companies," Motac said in a statement yesterday.

It added that tourism operators and travel agency businesses that have received the PEMERKASA financial assistance are automatically eligible for the one under PEMULIH and do not need to reapply.

"The Ministry calls on licensed tour operators under Motac who have never received financial assistance to take this opportunity and submit their applications," it said.

For more information on the PEMULIH eligibility requirements, visit Motac's official website at <http://motac.gov.my/pemulihmotac2021> or contact the nearest Motac state office.

The closing date for applications is Oct 15, 2021, and any applications submitted after that date will not be considered.

Separately, DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng said the government must reduce interest rate for bank loans to the tourism and hospitality sector that were adversely affected by the pandemic, where RM130 billion was lost in 2020.

The Department of Statistics Malaysia reported that last year, the country's tourism receipts recorded RM52.4 billion, which was a 71.2% drop from the RM182.1 billion recorded in 2019.

"There is an urgent need to allow the tourism industry to be sustainable and survive.

"Despite the poor performance of the tourism industry throughout 2020, the industry still generated RM199.4 billion in gross value added of tourism industries by contributing 14.1% to the GDP.

"A sustainable tourism industry is crucial to the normalisation of the Malaysian economy," he said in a statement yesterday.

Lim added that as a start, the government could reduce interest rates of at least 2%, especially for bank loans with a fixed interest rate or double the current interest rates.

"This will help to reduce their financial burden and allow them to survive, until there is a full reopening of the economy from the endless total or partial shutdowns," he said.

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