

Tourism industry set for revival

TOURISM, Art and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Nancy Shukri said the resumption of travel activities is a positive indication for domestic tourism to be reinvigorated again.

These developments will also allow industry players to revitalise their economic activities, she said, in response to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob's announcement that tourism and interstate travel to be allowed once 90% vaccination rate is achieved.

"I call on all Malaysian families to take full advantage of this flexibility so that all the planning done by the government will run smoothly.

Continue to adhere to the SOPs and carry out activities responsibly so that we are all protected from the pandemic," she said in a statement yesterday.

She is confident that the decision to allow cross-state movement is also welcomed by the entire chain of tourism industry players who have been preparing to return to contribute to the arts and cultural tourism sector in the country.

The minister added that the resumption will certainly address employment and income issues for those in this industry chain which has been severely affected over the past year due to the pandemic.

According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM), Malaysia's tourism receipts declined to RM52.4 billion, a 71.2% drop than RM182.1 billion.

"2020 is the second year that domestic tourism receipts exceeded the inbound tourism receipts with a contribution of 73.8%," Chief Statistician Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin (picture) said in a statement yesterday.

Domestic tourism generated RM38.6 billion of tourism receipts, with a decline of 58.3% compared to 2019.

Meanwhile, inbound tourism expenditure plummeted with a double-digit decline to 84.6%, recording only RM13.7 billion.

Simultaneously, outbound expenditure recorded a decrease of 61.7% amounting RM17.1 billion.

Mohd Uzir added that the industry had generated RM199.4 billion of Gross Value Added of Tourism Industry by contributing 14.1% to the GDP.

In terms of value, this shrinkage matches the performance shown in 2015, as a consequence of the government's restriction in economic activities to curb the Covid spread.

Meanwhile the direct tourism contribution to the national economy was severely affected with a 72% decrease.

DOSM stated that efforts to intensify domestic tourism activities should be the focus in reviving the country's tourism sector to counter the prolonged restrictions at the national borders still in force that affected the potential of foreign tourists' receipts.

"Malaysia's tourism industry should continue to focus on digitalisation and expansion of smart products and infrastructure as an initiative to develop a more resilient and sustainable future in Malaysia as recommended by the Malaysian Investment Development Authority," said Mohd Uzir.

"Digital technology has influenced the way people travel and the tourism industry players are changing the ways they operate. Moreover, this will rebuild the tourist's confidence through rebranding and developing communication plans to deliver messages where Malaysia is a safe and trusted travel destination," he added.

The government has launched the National Tourism Policy (NTP) 2020-2030 on Dec 23, 2020 to ensure the viability of the country's tourism industry and make Malaysia a preferred tourism destination worldwide.

Among the Transformation Strategies outlined in the NTP is to implement "Smart Tourism" which aims to take the industry to the next level by taking advantage of opportunities in the digital age.

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