

KK needs new tourism products

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KOTA KINABALU: The rapid growth of Kota Kinabalu as a tourism destination underlines the need to create new tourism products to meet the changing demands of visitors from all over the world, said Tourism, Culture & Environment Minister Datuk Seri Masidi Manjun.

“More tourists are coming to Kota Kinabalu. The best way to support this growth is by developing innovative, creative tourism products and attractions within the city for visitors on short trips to KK (Kota Kinabalu),” he said on Wednesday while speaking at the launching of the UMS-EcoCampus Visitor Information Centre

Centre (UMS-EVIC) on the University Malaysia Sabah (UMS) campus here. Calling the new UMS-EVIC as a step in the right direction, Masidi commended UMS for leading by example in developing the one-stop centre for tourists to enjoy the numerous natural attractions the campus has to offer, all conveniently located right within the city.

“Apart from being a centre for academic excellence, UMS –one of Malaysia’s largest and most beautiful universities – has taken the bold decision to promote the campus which has one of the last remaining forests and pristine beaches untouched by development,” he said and assured the ministry will support in promoting UMS as a tourist destination.

Masidi said Kota Kinabalu is fast-becoming a popular destination for tourists which also saw a 50 per cent increase in the arrival of Chinese tourists as of May, compared to the same period last year.

Kota Kinabalu International Airport (KKIA) is the second busiest airport in the country, serving 154 international flights per week and connected to 16 international destinations.

Meanwhile, UMS vice-chancellor Professor Datuk Dr Harun Abdullah said the opening of the new centre underlined the university’s commitment to develop a dedicated facility for its EcoCampus activities.

“This is a two-tier significant achievement; the centre is a gateway to UMS EcoCampus activities, welcoming visitors to observe, interpret

and appreciate nature, and at the same time marvel at architectural heritage, visiting galleries and participate in environmental education,” he told over 100 guests who witnessed the launching of the new centre.

Earlier during his address, Masidi suggested to the university to include bird-watching activity in its list of EcoCampus activities to provide an added interest and attraction for visitors to view the hundreds of species of birds that frequent the State.

“Among the potential activities that can be promoted in the campus is bird-watching which can be promoted a tourism product,” he said, adding that bird-watching tour activities can garner up to US\$100 per day which can also be an opportunity for stu-

dents to work as part time bird guides for tourists.

During the occasion, Masidi also took the opportunity to present prizes to winners of the Ecocampus Powerlense Photography Competition and was accompanied by Dr Harun.

Dr Harun said the opening of the new UMS-EVIC is part of the university’s efforts in its income generation programme through systematic, effective and dynamic EcoCampus activities which serves as a vital platform for educational activities as well as non-formal learning for schools.

“UMS has made great strides at the international stage, ranked 173 in the world as the most eco-friendly and greenest university campuses in the world which is an improvement of 72 rankings compared to 2014,” he said.



Masidi officially opens the visitor information centre as Dr Harun (third left) looks on



The Tourism, Culture & Environment Minister signs the launching plaque