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Budget 2022: Seven key initiatives to revive tourism sector

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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 29 -- Seven key initiatives, involving a total value of RM1.6 billion, will be implemented next year to revive the tourism sector which has been badly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Finance Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz said it included a Wage Subsidy Programme, which specifically targeted tourism operators whose income dropped by at least 30 per cent.

"With an allocation of RM600 million, this initiative will benefit more than 26,000 employers and 330,000 employees," he said when tabling the 2022 Budget in the Dewan Rakyat today.

He said the government was also allocating RM600 million as specific financing for the tourism sector under PENJANA Tourism Financing and BPMB Rehabilitation Scheme; RM85 million in special assistance to more than 20,000 tourism operators registered under the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture (MOTAC) for a period of three months and RM50 million for maintenance of tourism infrastructure, including the Sultan Abdul Samad Building and Lembah Bujang in Kedah.

A sum of RM30 million is allocated in matching grants for repair of 738 budget hotels that are registered under

MOTAC, as well as for registered home stay owners; RM50 million in matching grants to companies to organise arts and culture-related programmes, as well as RM60 million in incentive funds for activities to promote domestic tourism.

Meanwhile, Tengku Zafrul said special individual income tax relief for domestic tourism expenses of up to RM1,000 would be extended until the year of assessment 2022.

He said the government would intensify efforts to promptly revive the international health tourism industry to strengthen Malaysia's position as a preferred health tourism destination with an allocation of RM20 million to the Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council.

"The government also plans to extend several tax incentives including income tax exemption to organisers of arts and cultural activities, as well as international sports and recreational competitions until the year of assessment 2025," he added.

Meanwhile, he said the exemption on entertainment duty, including for theme parks and cinemas in all Federal Territories, and the tourism tax exemption would be extended until Dec 31, 2022.

He also suggested for state governments to also provide exemption on entertainment duty to support the recovery of the sector.

-- BERNAMA

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