

GENERAL

JPSM strengthening ecotourism to generate income for state governments



BATU PAHAT, Oct 2 -- The Forestry Department of Peninsular Malaysia (JPSM) will continue to focus on strengthening the ecotourism sector to help state governments to generate alternative income from forest resources.

Its director-general, Datuk Mohd Ridza Awang said previously, the state governments relied heavily on logging activities for revenue, although timber is not the only forest products that provides revenue.

“Forest not only produces timber, the uniqueness of the landscape and natural attractions can be developed as ecotourism products,” he said when met after closing a course for mountain guides here yesterday.

He said mountain climbing, which is becoming increasingly popular, could provide revenue for the state governments and those involved in the tourism industry.

“Of late, there have been encouraging response for climbing activities that in some areas, the number of participants exceed capacity of the place and has to be limited. Through vigorous promotion, this activity will continue to grow and be able to attract foreign tourists when the country's border is opened again,” he added.

Mohd Ridza said JPSM introduced the training for mountain guides, which is the first ever, to develop a model for mountain climbing management in Permanent Forest Reserve area.

Towards that end, he said, JPSM hoped to register all mountain guides for mountaineering activities in permanent forest reserve area under the department.

“There have been reports of accidents in the Forest Eco Park and State Forest Parks, such as on missing persons, injuries during climbing activities and reports of people losing their way. This course module is developed to address these cases,” he added.

-- BERNAMA