The Development of the Maritime Sector in Malaysia

Editors
Hanizah Idris
Tan Wan Hin
Chapter 6

The Development of Coastal Tourism: A Study of the North Pahang Coast

Tan Wan Hin & Goh Hong Ching

Introduction

Tourism has been aggressively developed in Malaysia after 1985 following the drop in prices of primary export commodities such as palm oil, rubber and tin (Tan 1991). Through campaigns such as Visit Malaysia Year 1990, 1994 and 2008, and financial incentives programmes, tourism has developed into the second most important source of income to the country. In 2009, 23.65 million tourists visited Malaysia generating an income of RM 52 million placing the country as the top tourist destination in Southeast Asia based on tourist arrivals (Star, February 5, 2010).

Like other states in the country, Pahang developed its tourism resources so as to expand and diversify its economic base as well as to eradicate poverty through job creation and business opportunities generated by tourism (A. I Assoc 1996). In 2009, 9.44 million tourists visited Pahang, of which 58.8 per cent were local tourists. There are presently 292 hotels with 17,014 rooms in the state (Perbadanan Kemajuan Bukit Fraser 2005). The most popular destination is Genting Highlands followed by the coastal areas of North Pahang.

Although tourism is an important industry in Pahang, it is characterized by various problems and limitations such as a short length of stay, low occupancy rates and fluctuations in tourist arrivals. This paper highlights various aspects of coastal tourism north of Kuantan which forms the main beach attraction in the state. It examines the development of coastal tourism as well as the issues arising as well as the perceptions of tourists which may constitute important inputs in tourism planning.

Coastal Tourism at glance

The concept of coastal tourism embraces the full range of tourism, leisure and recreational activities that take place in the coastal zone and the offshore coastal waters (Hall 2001). These include coastal tourism components, such as accommodation, catering facilities as well as the infrastructure supporting tourism development in the coastal zone. Coastal tourism is widely perceived as one of the fastest growing sectors in tourism (Pollard 1995; Kim and Kim