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Selangor steps up tourism programmes

SUBANG JAYA: Selangor will aggressively promote programmes related to the environment, health, education and homestay to attract more domestic and international tourists.

State Tourism Action Council executive chairman Datuk Subahan Kamal said Selangor has "all sorts of attractions to complement such popular tourism products such as the limestone caves and fireflies expedition".

Subahan said the state government had set aside a special budget to hold education camps, awareness programmes, international conferences and study tours to promote the products.

"We have great facilities for health and education tourism in the state," said Subahan.

"The council is currently developing health tourism packages to be promoted in Indonesia as 70 per cent of tourists who visit Malaysia for medical purposes are from the there."

Selangor's tourist arrivals have been increasing steadily in the last 10 years. The state registered 4.6 million visitors in 2006, 5.2 million, last year, and a target of 5.5 million, this year.

Subahan said the council will work closely with Tourism Minister Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said to promote homestay programmes as the ministry is aggressively promoting budget tourism.

Subahan said the council will emphasise the flora and fauna factor with the focus on the 130 million year-old trees at the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM).

"We are drafting a plan that

will help push Selangor's tourism industry, with us working with tour agencies and local councils to promote the attractions in Selangor.

"There are also plans to upgrade and build basic infrastructure at all identified tourist spots in the state," said Subahan, after announcing the 6th Asia Pacific Tourism Conference (Apeco) that will be held on Nov 6-7.

Apeco is an annual event

hosted by the Malaysia Association of Tour and Travel Agents (Matta) and the Tourism Ministry.

This year's conference will see a panel of international and local experts presenting a paper on eco-tourism, themed *To Develop Sustainable Eco-tourism Enterprise* to focus on three main eco-tourism attractions in Selangor: mangroves, bird watching in Taman Alam and fireflies expedition in Kuala Selangor.