

Almost one million tourists visited Labuan this year

LABUAN: Labuan has recorded almost a million foreign and local tourists throughout 2016.

Tourism and Culture Ministry Deputy Secretary-General (Tourism) Datuk Rashidi Hasbullah said that the ever increasing number of tourists showed the tourism development of this duty-free island with a total of 73,033 foreign visitors and 827,182 domestic tourists who visited Labuan until November.

"Various initiatives have been taken by the ministry such as conducting courses for tour guides to help develop this industry," he said at the closing of the Labuan Level 2 Local Nature Tourist Guide Course Tuesday.

He said the ministry has allocated RM75 million to finance part of the cost of or-

ganising such courses as the number of tour guides on the island need to be increased as currently there were only three licensed tourist guides on the island, one city tour guide (Blue Badge) and two nature tour guides (Green Badge).

"The number is not enough to meet current needs, particularly to accommodate the increase in foreign tourists to Labuan this year especially from China.

He said Labuan met the characteristics to becoming a prime tourist destination because it had rich natural resources such as beautiful islands and a treasure trove for diving destination with shipwreck sites namely Blue Water Wreck, American Wreck, Australian Wreck and Cement Wreck. - Bernama