



Network for backpackers



GO Backpack!, Malaysia's first budget travel network, will make its debut appearance at the second Malaysia Domestic Tourism Fair (May 14-16) at Putra World Trade Centre, Kuala Lumpur.

With its catchy slogan "My Itchy Feet", GO Backpack! is a network of lodging, transportation, tours, activities and food and beverage.

"It's a comprehensive network that will make budget travelling or backpacking much easier," says PostScript Hospitality Sdn Bhd business development director Nazaruddin Othman.

"The fair will be a good platform for us to soft launch the network and introduce it to both industry players and backpackers," he adds.

GO Backpack! plans to have its own portal, scheduled to go online by end of May. It will feature a list of its business partners. For a start, it will have a listing of five homes

from 128 homestay villages in the country. Eventually, more partners from other sectors like budget hotels, transportation, tour operators and restaurants will be added.

"We want to change the current perception of homestay in the country. Homestay should not only be confined to groups but it should also be open to free individual travellers especially backpackers," Nazaruddin says.

He says staying with a family in a kampung will be a good alternative for backpackers especially those looking for an exotic experience.

Not only targeted at foreign backpackers, GO Backpack! is also hoping to promote backpacking among Malaysian youth and eventually create a niche market - youth tourism - for the industry.

Hence, the network is set on a thrill concept to promote a thrilling experience at a destination in Malaysia for backpackers. "It's some-

thing like Thrill 3D/2N in Gopeng, Perak where travellers will get to experience whatever thrills Gopeng has to offer," says Nazaruddin.

To tap this market, GO Backpack! plans to introduce a starter pack that will consist of a travel guide-book listing all its business partners in Malaysia and a travel card.

While the network irons out the necessary system, the supposedly pre-paid travel card will act as a discount card for travellers to enjoy attractive discounts upon making purchases with the network partners. GO Backpack! is one of the 250 booths set up for the Malaysia Domestic Tourism Fair. The fair will feature two sub-events - Open Photography Challenge and Bridal Fair - tourism speaker sessions and pocket shows and games.

Exhibitors interested to showcase their tourism products at the fair can contact 03-9283 2268 or 03-2116 5951.