River roads

A construction worker gives direction as a crane lifts concrete at the Uraya River embankment on Jl. Pramuka Sari and Jl. Percetakan Negara, Central Jakarta, on Tuesday. The Central Jakarta administration plans to build inspection roads by the rivers that will also function as alternative roads when regular roads are jammed.

TOURISM

City tries to sell its attractions

Sita W Dewi
THE JAKARTA POST/JAKARTA

Hundreds of tourism business representatives from 30 cities across the Southeast Asian region gathered in Jakarta on Tuesday for the three-day Jakarta Tourism Business Forum of 2014, hosted by the Tourism and Culture Agency.

The forum kicked off on Tuesday with an expectation that the total transactions from business deals occurring during the event would reach billions of rupiah.

"I predict that the transactions among buyers and sellers during the forum will reach Rp 15 billion [US$1.22 million]." Jakarta Tourism and Culture Agency head Ari Budihana told a press conference at Millennium Hotel in Central Jakarta.

One hundred sellers from Jakarta and 194 buyers from 30 cities across Indonesia as well as Southeast Asian countries including the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, Vietnam and Malaysia have been arriving since Monday to participate in the forum, which features a table top session, cultural art performances and city excursions to a number of iconic sites, including the Old Town in West Jakarta and the capital's north beach, as well as a number of islands off the capital's north coast, reached by QuickSilver cruise, which departs from Sindu Karya's berth.

The guests will also be entertained with dining by the beach while enjoying a Jakarta sunset.

"Among Thai tourists, Jakarta is famous for its golfing tourism," a Thai travel agent representative, Preme Salakan, told the Jakarta Post on the sidelines of the forum.

She also pointed out that, aside from the traffic jams, Jakarta is a perfect place for Thai tourists. The food and the people are very nice," she said.

Salakan added that traveling abroad had been increasingly popular in Thailand, as it has been in most emerging economies.

"This year alone the number of Thai outbound tourists has exceeded 3 million," she added.

A travel agent representative from Pontianak, West Kalimantan, Yudi Firman, said that Jakarta was undoubtedly a popular destination for Pontianak tourists.

"Cities in Kalimantan are not directly connected so people will have to layover in Jakarta whenever they aim to fly to another city in Kalimantan. My clients usually use this opportunity to shop," he said.

Millennium Hotel general manager Menny Mercado pointed out that various cultural and sporting events in Jakarta had helped boost its hotel's occupancy rate.

"During the Jakarta Marathon in October, 70 participants stayed in this hotel. About 30 of them were international travelers who personally came over and participated," he said, adding that he encouraged the city administration to continue to promote the city for shopping and cultural attractions.

The author of the Miss Jining travel book series, Amelian Muntuari, who just recently launched her latest book, Miss Jining in Jakarta: Shop Till You Die, also said that Jakarta already has what it takes to become an international shopping destination.