KUCHING: Intensive promotional tourism programmes are to be implemented in order to enhance the tourism sector here in Demak Laut constituency.

In saying this, Demak Laut State Assemblyman Dr Hazland Hipni said this is in efforts to commercialise potential tourism products to the domestic and international markets.

According to him, the Bako Fest 2015 would be one of the programmes to strengthen the tourism sector for villages within Bako Buntal Bay and Tanjung Egorba.

Assistant Minister of Tourism Datuk Talip Zulpilip will officiate at the launching on 27 March held at Kampung Bako.

He added that the Bako Buntal Bay is blessed with its geographical structure which possesses a variety of potential tourism products to be commercialised, apart from the well known Bako National Park, that was established in 1957.

“Bako National Park has five private beaches and eighteen nature trails; you cannot get this anywhere else other than here. As the main attraction for the national park would be the ‘proboscis monkey’ as well as the ‘batu duit’ a natural rock formation in which has been the icon for the national park,”

Hazland disclosed that as of last year, the total number of visitors visiting the national park exceeded at 47,000 and as for the revenue income recorded was RM1.2 million. There is an annual increase of five per cent in the number of tourists visiting the national park, he stated.

“There are other products to be promoted such as the Pulau Laken, a legendary island within the vicinity of the national park, which has the potential for underwater diving, sea sports and leisure,” he said during a press conference after officiating the Tourism Awareness Centre held at Rumah Koperasi Kampung Bako Ulu, here yesterday.

The river stretching 20km from the river mouth towards the upstream of the river, could be utilised through the implementation of river cruise, floating restaurant as well crocodile watching and spotting in it is claimed to be a high density area for this wildlife, where there are six crocodiles spotted within every kilometre here.

“Bird watching has been one of the international tourist attractions whereby annually, to be precise in the month of December, there will be migratory birds from all around the world would lay over at Bako Buntal Bay.

“All this has yet to be properly commercialised to tourists; this product has the potential and we will work on it,” he said, adding that he believed with the aggressiveness of the tourism bodies and players, all this could be realised.

Through the establishment of homestay this will indirectly promote the Kampung Bako itself not only as a village of fishermen origin as well as it shrimp paste (belacan) industry, but also through recreational activities.

There will also be festivals to accommodate the attraction on a particular period such as the ‘pesta laut and pesta ambal’.

He pointed out that there would be 25 homestays to be established within a time frame of three years, as operators will undergo courses to certify homestay operators. This is to standardize in accordance with demands to cater for tourists, noting that there will be 25 more tourist guides to be trained within this year.

Meanwhile Hazland hoped for the bridge to Kampung Bako to be approved by the government and be constructed as this has been the request of the people here ever since the Independent era. The construction will be made two to three kilometres upstream in order to retain the eco-tourism here.

“With such facilities it will as well accommodate the increasing population here in Demak Laut,” he said.