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PARLIAMENT-LANGKAWI
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KUALA LUMPUR, MARCH 11⁸⁷ (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR
MOHAMAD DENIED IN THE DEWAN RAKYAT HERE TODAY THAT PULAU LANGKAWI
RESIDENTS ARE AGAINST THEIR ISLAND BEING MADE A FREE PORT.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID CERTAIN LEADERS WITH POLITICAL INTERESTS
HAD CLAIMED THE ISLANDERS OBJECTED TO THE GOVERNMENT MOVE MAKING THE
ISLAND A FREE PORT EFFECTIVE JAN 1 THIS YEAR.

HE SAID THIS IN REPLY TO A SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION FROM ENCIK
ZUBIR EMBONG (BN-KUALA TERENGGANU) WHO WANTED TO KNOW TO WHAT EXTENT
THE LOCALS HAD OBJECTED TO THE DECLARATION OF THEIR ISLAND AS A FREE
PORT.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ADVISED THE RESIDENTS NOT TO BE HASTY IN
SELLING OFF THEIR LAND AND TO HOLD ON TO IT SO THAT THE LAND COULD
BE USED AS COLLATERAL TO ACQUIRE SHARES IN INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL
VENTURES TO BE SET UP ON THE ISLAND.

REPLYING SIMULTANEOUSLY TO QUESTIONS FROM DR ABDUL HADI DERANI
(BN-KOTA SETAR) AND ENCIK HASHIM SAFIN (BN-TANAH MERAH), HE SAID THE
DECLARATION OF PULAU LANGKAWI AS A DUTY FREE PORT WAS AIMED AT
TURNING THE ISLAND INTO A MAJOR TOURIST DESTINATION IN THE COUNTRY.

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HE SAID THAT SINCE JANUARY, THE KEDAH GOVERNMENT HAD RECEIVED
MANY ENQUIRIES AND PROPOSALS TO SET UP ACCOMMODATION, COMMERCIAL AND
RECREATIONAL FACILITIES ON THE ISLAND.

AMONG THE PROGRAMMES PLANNED AND BEING IMPLEMENTED ON THE ISLAND
WERE EXPANSION OF THE AIRPORT, UPGRADING THE MAIN ROAD NETWORK AND
PROVISION OF WATER AND ELECTRICITY SUPPLY AND TELEPHONE SERVICES.

BESIDES THAT, LANGKAWI NOW HAD TWO JETTIES FOR PASSENGERS AND
CARGO, HE SAID, ADDING THAT WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE
PROJECTS LANGKAWI WOULD HAVE A COMPLETE INFRASTRUCTURAL NETWORK TO
MEET TOURISM DEMANDS.

THE GOVERNMENT ALSO PLANNED TO BUILD BOARDING HOUSES AND
SHOPPING COMPLEXES AND PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES.

TO A SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION FROM HAJI ABDUL MANAF AHMAD
(BN-SUNGAI PETANI) ON THE CHOICE OF PULAU LANGKAWI AS A FREE PORT,
HE SAID IT WAS ONE WAY OF ATTRACTING TOURISTS TO THE ISLAND WHICH
WAS FAMOUS FOR ITS NATURAL BEAUTY. -- BERNAMA

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