

# Plans to open remote atoll

LABUAN, Sun. — The Government plans to open up for tourism the remote but pristine Terumbu Layang-Layang atoll in the South China Sea using Labuan as the take-off point.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the atoll, part of the Spratly Islands, would be ideal for nature-lovers and sea sports enthusiasts.

He said there were already 20 chalets at Terumbu Layang-Layang and he wanted more entrepreneurs to invest in the tourism industry here and at the atoll.

Dr Mahathir said Labuan would be a good base for tours to Terumbu Layang-Layang as it was only 90-minutes away by air.

The Prime Minister who

had holidayed at the atoll in the past, said it had a sheltered lagoon seven kilometres long and three kilometres wide which would be ideal for sea sports.

He said there were already facilities like a jetty to cater for tourists.

Dr Mahathir said this when opening an offshore bank, Public Bank (L) Ltd, and a trust company, PB Trust Co Sdn Bhd, here today. They are wholly-owned subsidiaries of public-listed Public Bank Bhd.

On the future of Labuan as a duty-free island and international offshore financial centre, he said the Government wanted to draw in investors and one such field was tourism.

He hoped investors would go into hotel construction as there was a demand for more rooms on the island.