

\$20bn international airport in Sepang?

By AHIRUDIN ATTAN **BT** - 4 SEP 1991

(P)

AN INTERNATIONAL airport in Sepang, Selangor? Prime Minister Datuk Seri **Dr Mahathir Mohamad**, mentioned this possibility in his address to state government officials and Cabinet ministers after a state briefing in Malacca yesterday.

He cited \$20 billion as the possible cost for building the new airport.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir is likely to be asked for a reconfirmation on this matter at a post-Cabinet news conference in Malacca today.

The proposed construction of the second international airport has been a subject of speculation since its announcement by Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik a few years ago.

Sepang has been mentioned several times as a suitable site for the new airport, proposed to avoid serious *congestion* problems at the existing Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Subang.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir mentioned Sepang as the site of the new airport and the cost to build the airport when speaking of the need for ministries, agencies and departments to be self-sufficient and for them to be able to identify new source of funds to help the Government boost revenues.

"If we were to build the international airport in Sepang, with costs which can run into \$20 billion, the airport facilities will not only benefit investors in Sepang, Kuala Lumpur or Selangor, but also investors in Malacca and elsewhere," he said.

On the first day of a two-day visit to the state yesterday, the Prime Minister opened the **mini-Asean** village in Air Keroh and officiated at the development of a golf course in **Jasin**.

The Golden Valley golf resort, a **54-hole** course, will be the second largest golf course in the world, after a **104-hole** course in the US, Malacca Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Rahim **Tamby Chik** said in his address.

Tan Sri Rahim said there are plans, depending on the future response to the resort, to expand the golf course to a **108-hole** course, making it the largest in the world. "This will, undoubtedly, make Malacca and Malaysia a major tourist destination."

The resort, which is being undertaken by a Malaysian-Japanese joint venture, is scheduled for completion in 1994. Development costs are expected to amount to some \$50 million.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said with the

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various tourism projects undertaken by the State Government, Malacca is poised to become the largest tourist attraction of the country.

He said tourist arrivals in Malacca have already reached 1 million **people**. "We had targeted for each state to attract the same number of tourists in a

year as the population size of the state. In Malacca's case, which has a population of about 500,000 people, there are two tourists to every person in the state."

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir is scheduled to open the **Tapa Nyai** island resort in **Pulau Besar** after chairing today's Cabinet meeting in the state capital.