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PM WANTS REPORT ON LANGKAWI CUSTOMS DUTIES WOES

Mahathir-duties

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LANGKAWI, Jan 18 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has asked ⁹² (the Kedah government to submit a full report on the problem of high duties which the customs reportedly imposed on goods leaving Langkawi. ²)

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said he discussed the matter with customs and immigration officers at a closed-door meeting here yesterday.

The Prime Minister said the customs had to impose strict checks and collect taxes accordingly to prevent accusation of their involvement in hanky panky dealings.

On other hand, imposing high duties may make it not worthwhile for tourists to shop on the duty-free island, he told reporters at the airport here before returning to Kuala Lumpur.

+As the matter has just cropped up, I have asked the state government and relevant authorities to submit a full report for study,+ he added. -- more

▼18/01/17-58MST

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Mahathir-duties 2 (last) Langkawi

He said the customs was conducting stringent checks because it suspected some unscrupulous people were using students to buy duty-free cigarettes and liquor in big quantities.

Regulations allow visitors staying more than 72 hours on the island to buy duty-free goods worth up to \$500 for personal consumption or as gifts.

+However, if one buys cigarettes worth \$500, they cannot be for personal use,+ Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said.

He said the government would also carefully study the problem of people from a neighbouring country working at restaurants on the island when they had entered the country on social visit passes.

The problem should not be viewed solely from the legal aspect because the restaurants, a mainstay of the island's economic activities, might be adversely affected if the government took action, he said.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, who came here on Thursday, spent 10 minutes visiting stalls at the airport complex before his departure. -- Bernama

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