

PM impressed with airport staff resuming operations so quickly

By Errol Oh and Rohiman Haroon

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today he was impressed with the speedy resumption of services at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport's Terminal One building in Subang after last Monday's early morning fire.

The Prime Minister attributed this good showing to the hard work put in by the Department of Civil Aviation employees and other airport workers.

"I am impressed that the services at Terminal One were resumed in such a short time. This is because the airport and the DCA employees worked hard to en-

sure that the terminal is operational again," he told reporters after a brief visit to the damaged section soon after disembarking at the airport on his return from Pulau Tioman.

It was Dr Mahathir's second inspection of the damaged area.

He first inspected the area on the morning of the blaze in which three DCA security guards died. The fire had also gutted more than 20 duty-free shops in the south wing.

On whether construction of the international airport in Sepang would be expedited in the wake of the fire, Dr Mahathir said it was already progressing as fast as possible.

When asked if there would be changes to the se-

curity measures at the airport, he said the matter should be left to the DCA as the department knew best.

Dr Mahathir was accompanied by DCA director-general Datuk Zolkipli Abdul and airport general manager Abdul Rahim Kechot during the 30-minute inspection tour. Then he was briefed by Rahim on the progress of the clean-up operations.

In Butterworth, Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said today that restoration work on Terminal One would be completed in two weeks.

However, he said, the duty-free shops, the worst affected area, would take some time for the authorities to repair.

Dr Ling also said the authorities, including the DCA

and the Fire Services Department, would review safety measures at the airport to avoid any recurrence.

"We are also concerned with the attitude of some duty-free shop tenants who stacked up their goods. This blocked the sprinklers.

"The sprinkler system was in good condition but was not effective (due to the blockage)," he told reporters after launching the piling works for the \$300 million North Butterworth Container Terminal (NBCT) project here.

On a suggestion that there should be a new set of regulations on safety measures to avoid fires in airports throughout the country, Dr Ling said there was no necessity to do so.