

\$11m project to stop pollution at resorts

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By Azmi M. Anshar

LANGKAWI, Sun. — The Government will spend \$11 million to construct a drainage and irrigation system in Kampung Chenang here — the site of a dozen big and medium-sized beach resorts — to contain the flow of dirty water from the resort.

The pledge came from the Prime Minister **Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad** after he visited the site where the dirty water was flowing today.

There had been complaints from tourists on the island's cleanliness and Dr Mahathir said the Government wants to act fast to rectify the problem.

The Prime Minister was briefed by Langkawi Development Authority (Lada) officials on the problems faced by resort operators.

When inspecting the site, Dr Mahathir saw the ditch along the road leading to Kampung Chenang clogged with, undergrowth, forcing the dirty water to flow out to the sea.

At a news conference later, Dr Mahathir said he was

happy to note that resort operators had promoted their establishments in Europe, but reminded them to opt for a long-term plan that would encourage repeated visits.

He also noted that operators had formed a pact to bring down room rates to a more reasonable level.

Overall, he said shops and retail outlets had improved, but was not sure whether the prices of duty-free goods had gone down.

"Retailers must remember that every sale made must encourage more tourists to shop here," he added.

Malaysia Airlines' move to increase flights to Langkawi to 20 a day was a positive move to encourage tourism, besides making the Langkawi Airport the third busiest in the country after the Kuala Lumpur International Airport and Penang Bayan Lepas Airport.

On next year's Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace (Lima) exhibition, Dr Mahathir said there would be a problem in hiring the necessary manpower because the organisers

could not accurately predict the response.

On the astronomical land prices that the Federal Government must pay to acquire land here for development, he said there would be an investigation if such evaluation was marked up unfairly just so that the state government could collect higher taxes.

He added the Government was not satisfied with recent evaluations but would, nevertheless, pay if the land prices were fair.

On his arrival, he was briefed on the development projects currently underway, including the proposed site of the centre.

He was also briefed on the progress of the extended bays near Langkawi Airport.

He also visited the Mofaz Pilot Training School and, after lunch, inspected the Customs and Excise Department's marine jetty at Bukit Malut.

He visited the site of the land reclamation by Trimula Development Sdn Bhd before leaving for Kuala Lumpur.