

Police praised for making Langkawi safe for tourists

NST - 8 JUN 1993

By Saiful Azhar
Abdullah

LANGKAWI, Mon. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today praised the police for their excellent job in making Langkawi one of the safest international tourist destinations.

He said he hoped the police would maintain the high standard of service and improve on it.

Dr Mahathir said tourists visiting the island resort could rest assured of their safety.

The growing volume of tourist arrivals since the island was accorded duty-free status on June 2, 1987, was evidence of the tourists' confidence.

Dr Mahathir said a total of 1,148,874 tourists visited Langkawi last year.

He was speaking at the opening of the RM28.3 million Langkawi district police headquarters at Kuah here.

Also present were Menteri Besar Tan Sri Osman Aroff, Agriculture Minister Datuk Seri Sanusi Junid, Deputy Home Minister Datuk Megat Junid Megat Ayub and Deputy Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Mohd Noor.

Dr Mahathir said he was confident that the rate of tourist arrivals to the island would grow over the next few years in view of the tremendous infrastructure development.

"The police have displayed commendable achievement in maintaining peace and order on the island and at sea. The Marine police play their role

well in upholding the sovereignty of our waters and we do not see threats of piracy and smuggling," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the Government would continue with its efforts to modernise the police force.

Towards this end, he said, the Government would construct a marine police jetty

at Bukit Malut here at a cost of RM5 million.

Dr Mahathir said the Government would also provide the force with more patrol boats and modern equipment.

"We hope the police will strive on professionalism by acquiring more knowledge and skills to excel in their

profession. The Marine police should also acquire other skills like controlling oil pollution."

Dr Mahathir said the remarkable change in Langkawi was the result of the millions of ringgit in investments injected by the Government to upgrade the island's infrastructural

facilities such as the airport, road network and jetties.

He said the Government had also spent a substantial amount of money promoting Langkawi abroad.

"We are now witnessing the fruits of those efforts and I am confident that the number of tourists visiting the island will increase in

the coming years," he added.

Besides tourism activities, Dr Mahathir said the development of Langkawi had attracted investors.

"Their presence has opened vast job and commercial opportunities for local residents.

"We can now be proud that Langkawi's image has soared to a level of that achieved by Hawaii, the Carribean and Mediterranean...and safety is a factor that attracts tourists."

Dr Mahathir said the initiative to set up the northern growth triangle involving Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia would enhance the island's development.

Such co-operation would link Langkawi with Phuket and Danau Toba.

Later at a Press conference, Dr Mahathir said the reluctance of Langkawi residents to sell their land had prompted developers to resort to reclamation of coastal areas.

On this year's Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition, Dr Mahathir said the Government would launch a promotion blitz at the coming Paris Air Show.

He said the response from aviation and maritime managers to the exhibition was very encouraging, promising a bigger event than Lima '91.

On his visit yesterday, Dr Mahathir said he visited several projects including those to be completed by September, in time for Lima '93.

He expressed satisfaction with the progress of the projects.