

Dr M: Langkawi projects will not affect island's environment

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LANGKAWI, Sun. — The rapid development of Pulau Langkawi will not affect the island's environment because it has been planned properly, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said the development was well guided by the Government to ensure the island's environment was protected and there was no indiscriminate felling of trees.

"Some of the hotels are tucked under trees. Some of them do not cut down the trees when building the hotels. They even plant more trees at their resorts," he told reporters at DeLima Resort after visiting projects which would be ready for this year's Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace exhibition (Lima '93).

Dr Mahathir was asked to comment on claims by certain quarters that the development of the island could cause environmental degradation.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir visited several projects, including the exclusive The Datai — the new RM70 million 108-room resort which will be opened on Oct 29.

He was briefed on the facilities by Peremba senior manager Jasha Khan Sultan.

After the visit to The Datai, Dr Mahathir inspected the progress of YTL Corporation's restaurant-in-the-swamp at a mangrove area in Kuala Kisap. YTL Corporation managing director Datuk Francis Yeoh briefed Dr Mahathir on the project.

He then visited Langkawi's largest shopping facility, the Jetty Point, and boarded the Langkawi Development Authority's (Lada) newly-

acquired ferry at the jetty in Kuah.

Dr Mahathir ended his two-day visit to the island by visiting the Trimula Development's land reclamation project.

Dr Mahathir said work on preparations for Lima '93 was progressing well.

He said he was confident that the island would have adequate rooms for visitors of Lima '93, which will be held between Dec 7 and 12.

Dr Mahathir said small hotels had been built on the island to cater for the expected influx of tourists in December.

"I am confident there won't be accommodation problem during Lima '93," he said, adding that a contingency plan had been drawn up to tackle any shortage of rooms during the exhibition.

On transportation, Dr Mahathir said the ferry service to Langkawi had improved

following the involvement of Lada in the ferry service.

He said Lada had acquired two boats which each could ferry 250 passengers per trip.

Lada, he added, expected to acquire its third boat by early November.

"The flight services to the island have also improved since Mofaz Air Sdn Bhd introduced a flight service from Alor Star to here," he added.

The Prime Minister was also impressed with the restaurant-in-the-swamp in Kuala Kisap.

"This is a unique restaurant in the mangrove swamp, probably the first in the world," he added.

On the development of Pulau Rebak, Dr Mahathir said it was progressing well.

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