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## Develop east coast beaches, says PM

KEMAMAN: The 900km-stretch of beaches of the east coast states must be properly developed to bring greater benefits to the people, Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

The Prime Minister said it would be a waste if huts were built along the beaches for budget tourists or backpackers.

He said resorts and five-star hotels, for example, could be developed to cater to big-spending tourists and travellers.

Such projects would benefit the people.

"These projects will provide jobs and the people can open small restaurants serving traditional food," he said at the ground-breaking ceremony of the Kijal tourist town project, 18km from here.

Also present was Menteri Besar Tan Sri Haji Wan Mokhtar Wan Ahmad.

Dr Mahathir said the east coast states should exploit fully the clean and lovely beaches for tourism.

He, however, said it was important to get the necessary expertise and high capital investments for proper development.

The tourist town project, a joint venture between the Terengganu state government and Genting Berhad, is sited on a 315ha beachfront. It would include 230 villas, a five-star hotel and 40 chalets.