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Mahathir - Casino

NO NEW CASINO IN MALASIA, EXISTING ONE SUFFICIENT -- MAHATHIR

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LANGKAWI, Nov 11 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the government will not approve the setting up of any new casino in Malaysia as the existing one is sufficient.

"I have said umpteen times no more new casino in Malaysia...existing one is sufficient," he told reporters before leaving for Kuala Lumpur after a brief visit to Langkawi.

Even if people wanted to have a casino in the boat, the government would not permit it, Dr Mahathir said.

"So, once and for all, don't ask this question again," he said when asked to comment on rumours that the government had approved the setting up of a casino on Langkawi.

The Prime Minister said since Langkawi was given free port status, more than a million people had visited Langkawi even though there was no casino on the island.

Even if the island had no free port status and some traders were selling their goods at high prices, people would still come to Langkawi, the Prime Minister said. -- more

KHY AAM

▼11/11/19-42MST

CNS3068

U GE 11-11 00102 ED443

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Mahathir - Casino 2 Langkawi

Dr Mahathir also said the Langkawi Development Authority (LADA) which met here today had approved development projects valued at more than RM1 billion for the island.

The projects included the development golf courses, chalets, shopping complexes, marine and prawn rearing projects, he said.

The Prime Minister attended the LADA board meeting at the Langkawi Sheraton in his capacity as adviser. The meeting was jointly chaired by Kedah Menteri Besar Tan Sri Osman Aroff and former Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin. -- more

KHY AAM

▼11/11/19-48MST

CNS3144

U GE 11-11 00156 ED450

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Mahathir - Casino 3 Langkawi

Dr Mahathir said LADA had also received an application from the private sector for a major health farm project which would include a marina covering 400 hectares.

LADA though agreeable in principle to the project wanted more details from the developer before approval could be given, he said.

The industrialist wanted to develop the project over three years, he said.

The Prime Minister also expected tourist arrivals this year to exceed the number for the whole of last year.

Between January and August this year more than 800,000 tourists had visited Langkawi compared to 1.02 million for the whole of last year, he said.

"We believe that with the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace (LIMA) exhibition, the number of tourists to Langkawi will exceed the figure for last year," he said. -- more

KHY AAM

▼11/11/21-00MST

CNS3157
U GE 11-11 00175 ED451
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Mahathir - Casino 4 Langkawi

Dr Mahathir said the government's objective was to match the number of tourists to Malaysia with the size of its population with one tourist for every resident in this country.

"We need 20 million tourists by the year 2000," he said.

The Prime Minister said the number of tourists to Malaysia totalled eight million last year and he expressed the hope that the number would increase through the Visit Malaysia Year campaigns.

He said Malaysia wanted to emulate countries such as Cyprus where the ratio of tourists to the population was 2:1 and in Malta it was 3:1.

Responding to reporters' questions, he said the government would permit the development of Gunung Raya here for tourism including the building of chalets provided it did not involve the felling of many trees, and a major portion of the construction involved timber and there was controlled development with minimum effect on the environment. -- more

KHY AAM

▼11/11/21-15MST-
CNS3164
U GE 11-11 00113 ED452
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Mahathir - Casino 5 (last) Langkawi

At present there was only a Tea House and a look out point on Gunung Raya which was 867 metres above sea-level. The two projects were developed by Syarikat Woodhouse Sdn Bhd at a cost of RM4 million.

Opening the Tea House this afternoon, Dr Mahathir said Langkawi residents were fortunate because of the many development projects on the island, their lifestyle was better than that of the people on the mainland.

Meanwhile LADA General Manager Haji Abdul Halij Qabdui Mutalib told reporters that LADA at its meeting today approved seven projects.

KHY AAM