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Mahathir-rates

PM ADVISES TO MAINTAIN REASONABLE RATES, PRICES FOR LIMA '93

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LANGKAWI, Nov 28 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad today called for reasonable hotel room rates and prices of foodstuff in Langkawi during the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace (Lima) '93 exhibition from Dec 7 to 12 to keep attracting tourists to the resort island.

Business houses and traders must not take advantage of visitors and raise rates and prices indiscriminately, he told reporters at the Langkawi airport before flying back to Kuala Lumpur after a short visit.

"Lima is a government effort. We look at the overall situation to improve the economy of the country and not to bring profits to only a few people," he said.

He was asked to comment on the possibility of higher room rates for Lima '93 following press reports that the official agent for accommodation, Towerlite Travel & Tours Sdn Bhd, was imposing higher than published rates for the exhibition.

Dr Mahathir said raising the rates and prices would tend to indicate that Malaysians were only interested in reaping profits. -- more

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Dr Mahathir said traders should maintain the rates and prices during Lima, though they might not have to give discounts.

Saying that he was aware of higher rates during air shows in any country, Dr Mahathir said that rates also went up in Barcelona during the Olympic Games and tourists did not want to go there again because they felt they had been cheated.

He said the hotels had published rates and they could not impose rates higher than those.

"It is not a healthy practice to raise rates at this time (Lima '93)" he said.

Dr Mahathir said he was otherwise happy with the preparations for Lima '93, and added that he was confident it would be successful. -- more

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On the Kuala Kedah Bridge, which was closed after a barge knocked into one of the piers on Nov 15, Dr Mahathir said the design of the structure should have taken into consideration the need to provide sufficient barriers for the piers.

The prime minister, who visited the bridge earlier today, said the piers of the Penang Bridge had protective concrete islands to stop vessels from knocking into them.

Replying to questions, he said the action the government had taken for Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating's derogatory remarks against him were adequate and no other action would be taken.

Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat had announced yesterday that cooperation in broadcasting and information between Malaysia and Australia had been frozen until Keating apologized to Dr Mahathir for calling him a recalcitrant because he did not attend a recent meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (Apec) in Seattle in the United States.

Dr Mahathir visited the Lima '93 exhibition centre at the Langkawi airport, the Berjaya Langkawi Beach Resort in Teluk Burau and the Masjid Al-Hana in Kuah which is being renovated. -- Bernama

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