

# Parties free to open door to all races

LANGKAWI, Sun. — All Barisan Nasional component parties are free to liberalise their membership policies as long as they are in line with the ruling coalition's principles, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said the political parties were free to open their membership to other races and the Barisan Nasional would welcome the move.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Barisan Nasional chairman, was speaking to reporters at the Langkawi International Airport here after a day-long visit to the island.

He was responding to reporters' questions on MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik's statement yesterday that the MCA was opening its doors to include Malaysians of other races with Chinese ancestry.

Dr Mahathir said it was MCA's right to liberalise its membership policy and accept anyone to join its party and added that the move was good and that party memberships should not be restricted to one race.

Asked whether Barisan Nasional component parties were free to liberalise their membership policies, Dr Mahathir said:

"They have been given the freedom like the Gerakan. Umno is also liberal in its policy, we have already accepted the Malaysian Thais and Sabah Bumiputeras to join the party."

Asked whether there would be a "tussle" between the component parties to enrol members, Dr Mahathir said this would not be a problem since anyone can join any party.

On his visit to the island, Dr Mahathir said the Government had agreed in principle to expand the international airport to accommodate larger aircraft. "The expansion is necessary to accommodate Boeing 747 aircraft," he said, adding that he hoped the project could be finished before the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace exhibition (Lima '95).

"But the project will take some time to complete as it involves land reclamation. The reclaimed area needs time to settle."

Asked about the land erosion along the road leading to the peak of Gunung Raya, Dr Mahathir said the erosion was not serious.

"Steps have been taken

## Brown eagle symbol for Langkawi

□ FROM PAGE ONE

to stop the erosion and we plan to upgrade the road to prevent the problem getting worse," he said.

Dr Mahathir said he invited Tan Sri Lim Goh Tong (chairman of the Genting Group) to the island today to present his views on how to tackle the problem.

"As a person who has experience on the problem at Genting Highlands, he can

offer us suggestions to reduce the incidence of land erosion at Gunung Raya."

Dr Mahathir said Lim would discuss with the Public Works Department measures to rectify the erosion and hoped work on the problem would begin during the current dry season.

Dr Mahathir said that there was also a suggestion to build a landmark for Langkawi and that a brown eagle had been proposed as

the symbol.

"It is a suitable idea and we are considering how the landmark should be built — in the form of a monument or a tower," he added.

Dr Mahathir inspected progress of the development of the Rebak Marina project at Pulau Rebak Marina and visited the tea house at Gunung Raya, the Kuah jetty, Masjid Al-Hana in Kuah, Trimula Development Sdn Bhd's waterfront project

and DeLima duty-free bazaar.

Dr Mahathir also joined his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, in watching a badminton exhibition match at the new multi-purpose hall at the Langkawi sports complex.

The matches paraded the Thomas and Uber Cup players who were training here for the Cup finals scheduled in May in Jakarta.