

# Dr M: Labuan can become Pearl of South China Sea

**By K.P. Waran and Joseph Bingkasan**

LABUAN, Mon. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tonight said the Government, with the active participation of the private sector, could turn Labuan into the "Pearl of the South China Sea".

The Prime Minister said efforts were now being made to develop the island's economic and tourism industries to a standard even better than Langkawi.

"Together we can make the island the most well-known and popular in the world ... better than Hawaii," he said at a dinner here attended by heads of Government departments, local community leaders and chief executives of big companies operating on the island.

He said the Government had made Labuan a Federal Territory and an International Offshore Financial Centre (IOFC) and there was no reason for the island not to attain a higher status in terms of economic and tourism development.

Dr Mahathir said every effort would be made by the Government to equip Labuan to attain such a status. He said measures would be taken to attract more investors to come to the island.

He said many foreign offshore financial institutions

had established their bases in Labuan and there were still more intending to invest here.

The Prime Minister said some of the foreign financial institutions who planned to come to Labuan were now operating in Kuala Lumpur.

"They are waiting for the completion of the multi-million ringgit financial park," he added.

Dr Mahathir said for investors to come with big investments, they must be assured of political stability in the country, in particular the political environment in Labuan.

"For political stability to prevail, there must not be a change in Government ... different Governments would have different policies and this is not good for investors," he said.

He said political stability and peace were among the factors conducive for rapid

development. He also said when big investments come to Labuan it would contribute to more employment opportunities for the locals.

Dr Mahathir said under the Barisan Nasional Government, Labuan like elsewhere would prosper and the people would be proud of being part of the island population.

On local politics, the national BN chairman said only the national coalition could bring about changes in Labuan to reflect its status as a IOFC.

"What has the Opposition (Parti Bersatu Sabah) done for to Labuan ... now the party is here again playing on emotions, PBS is not needed here," he said.

Earlier, in Kota Kinabalu, Dr Mahathir said the distribution of seats among Barisan Nasional component parties in the general elec-

tion is a clear indication that the national coalition wants to share power with all the races in the country.

The Prime Minister said every race is represented in the BN and the interests of Malaysians given due consideration in all policies and programmes implemented by the Government.

For example, he said, candidates from the various parties were sometimes allocated seats where the person is not of the same race as a majority of the voters, which shows that Malaysians have become mature enough to choose their representative based on capacity to serve and bring development instead of race.

Speaking at a meet-the-rakyat session at the Likas sports complex near here, Dr Mahathir said, in previous elections and before Umno came to Sabah, the

party always contested fewer than 50 per cent of the seats in Parliament to ensure wide representation.

"During this election, Umno is contesting 52 per cent of the seats. Technically if Umno wins all the seats it can administer the country on its own, but this has never been our plan.

"We want to share the power to administer the nation with all the races, thus all component parties which represent all races would have a say in the Government. What more reason do Malaysians need to return the BN to power with a greater majority?"

The Prime Minister urged the people not to be hoodwinked by the false promises of the Opposition which he added cannot be fulfilled by any Government in the world.

He cited the pledge by

Parti Melayu Semangat 46 to abolish taxation and added that it was an obvious ploy to fish for votes since no development programmes could be implemented nor infrastructure and other amenities provided for the people.

He urged the people of Sabah to vote for the BN in all the 20 parliamentary constituencies to ensure that development efforts already being instituted by the State Government can continue.

He said Parti Bersatu Sabah, which had failed to bring development to the State during its nine years in power, had now set its sights on capturing some seats in other States.

He added that the party which could not serve the people well in Sabah could not possibly bring benefit in other constituencies.

He said Opposition Lead-

er Lim Kit Siang, with his slogan "Chief Minister with power" had become a power-crazy man and wanted the power of "Robocop" so that he could do whatever he wanted.

He added that there was no democracy in the DAP and the party was owned by Lim and his son Guan Eng who in the past have been known to expel anyone who did not see eye-to-eye with them or who are regarded as a threat to the leadership.

He said in the last general election Lim had succeeded in removing from politics former Chief Minister Tun Lim Chong Eu who was an elder statesman and who had contributed much.

This time around he was trying to defeat Dr Koh Tsu Koon — a second generation leader who has shown tremendous leadership qualities.