

02 JUN 1996

Mahathir-Greed

DR MAHATHIR REMINDS LANGKAWI TRADERS AGAINST GREED

LANGKAWI, June 2 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad again expressed his disappointment at some traders on this duty-free island for being greedy.

He said various efforts had been taken by the government to remind the traders but they still persisted.

"I don't know what else can be done to instil awareness for even the threat of withdrawing the duty-free status did not give any effect.

"We have done so much to develop Langkawi while they have not come out with a single sen, yet they have never been grateful," he said here.

He said the government was not jealous that the islanders had become rich as a result of the development in Langkawi besides enjoying duty-free status, but they must think of the future of the island.

Dr Mahathir said the government had taken various efforts to promote Langkawi and attract investors here but the attitude of a handful of traders could jeopardise such efforts.

"People come here as they are told that prices of goods here are cheap but the traders take the opportunity to exploit the visitors to the maximum," he said.

"Such greed will in the end lead to their own downfall," he said commenting on the complaints by visitors that prices of goods and service charges here were high and not consistent especially during the holidays.

On the complaints over frequent interruptions in water supply on the island during the peak season, Dr Mahathir said the situation was only temporary.

"There are many development projects going on which cause the roads to be dirty and spoilt and water supply interrupted but these will not be prolonged.

"As soon these projects are completed, I'm sure the roads will no longer be dirty or spoilt and the situation will be more comfortable," he added.

While here, the Prime Minister also launched the Langkawi Air Recreation Club (KRUL) at the Langkawi International Airport.

After being introduced to members of the club, Dr Mahathir who is also the patron of KRUL spent about 20 minutes flying around the airport on a microlight aircraft with flying instructor Kapt Zainol Taib.

He later visited the Langkawi International Airport runway expansion project scheduled for completion next year. The runway can accommodate large aircraft like the Boeing 747.

Dr Mahathir also visited the Tanjung Malai Jetty project, near Pantai Tengah costing about RM300 million.

The project involved the construction of a 1,200-room holiday resort with the first phase expected to be ready before the Langkawi International Maritime and Air (LIMA) exposition next year.

Dr Mahathir, who arrived yesterday, also visited the Garden Village (Kampung Dalam Taman) located at Bayas before cruising around Langkawi island in a luxury boat.

He was accompanied by his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamad Ali and two of their sons. -- BERNAMA

ZAA AO