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Mahathir-tourism

PM CALLS FOR MORE TRADITIONAL VILLAGE-STYLE HOLIDAY RESORTS

LANGKAWI, Aug 10 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today suggested that more holiday resorts based on the local traditional village concept be developed to attract more tourists.

The prime minister said that such resorts were unique and provided a new experience for visitors.

"I think that many foreign tourists are interterested to see Malaysia. If they want to see a hotel that is not much different from the ones in New York and London, there is no reason for them to fly thousands of miles to come here," he told reporters at Kampung Tok Senik, Mata Air, here.

Kampung Tok Senik, a resort modelled after a Kedah traditional Malay village, is built by the Maju Group which also owns desa Utara, a traditional Malay holiday resort at Pedu Lake, Kedah.

Dr Mahathir, who opened Kampung Tok Senik yesterday, witnessed the wedding of Annuar Ibrahim and Juliana Alias at Rumah Tok Dukun, one of the 12 houses in the resort, today.

He said it would be a good idea for the other states to build such resorts modelled after their own villages.

On the government's move to encourage the villagers to open their doors to tourists under the "house accommodation" concept, he said he had encouraged such a concept for a long time.

"I have long advocated that if we want to provide accommodation, we must do it properly. Don't let us build a dilapidated hut with no windows as this will tarnish our good name when our country actually has high values," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia is a beautiful country but if small and sub-standard huts were built, it would tantamount to "selling gold cheaply".

On environmental preservation from development projects, he said although most of the developers were getting more sensitive to the issue, the situation was still not satisfactory.

"The developers try to preserve the trees and the hills but it has not reached a satisfactory level," he said.

On the roads in Langkawi which have been damaged and are full of potholes, Dr Mahathir said they would be repaired but he explained that with the current rapid development, damage to roads could not be avoided.

Touching again on the motion by some parties in the Langkawi Umno division calling on the government to review the island's duty-free status, he said only a few were ungrateful whereas the majority of the Langkawi residents realised the bounty they were enjoying resulting from the conferment of the status.

Yesterday the prime minister expressed regret over the motion approved by the Langkawi Umno division at its meeting on July 27 this year. --

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