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Dr M, Siti Hasmah visit Johor's Sebana resort

PENGERANG, Thurs. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali today visited Sebana Golf and Marina Resort.

They toured the resort and Dr Mahathir planted a nibong tree (*Oncosperma tigillarum*).

Tan Sri Azman Hashim, chairman of Arab-Malaysian Development Bhd, the majority shareholder of the resort project, presented honorary memberships to Dr Mahathir and Dr Siti Hasmah.

The guests were earlier greeted on arrival by boat from Nam Heng Estate near Ulu Tiram by the beat of the rebana and the Sekolah Tun Fatimah school band.

Also present were Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman and wife Datin Prof Jamilah Ariffin, Defence Minister Datuk Syed Hamid Albar, who is the MP for Kota Tinggi.

Speaking to reporters later, Dr Mahathir said Sebana Resort and tourism destinations in Johor on the whole had good potential to attract tourists.

Dr Mahathir and wife, arrived in Johor this morning, spent the night at the resort. They are scheduled to return to Kuala Lumpur tomorrow morning.

Sebana Resort is developed by Sebana Holdings Sdn Bhd, a 60:40 joint venture between AMDB and State Government-owned YPJ Holdings Sdn Bhd. The project covers an area of 520 hectares on the bank of Sungai Sebana in Mukim Pengerang, in Kota Tinggi district.

In his speech to welcome the Prime Minister and wife, Azman said Sebana Resort was the first in the country to offer an international-class marina and a competition-standard golf course in one place.

"In addition, Sebana's strategic location within the Indonesia-Malaysia-Singapore Growth Triangle should make it an attraction with potential for tourists and investors."

Accommodation for members and a harbour master's office are among the facilities available at Sebana Resort.

Azman said direct ferry services were being planned to link Sebana Resort with Johor Baru and Singapore. The service between Tanah Merah in Singapore and Sebana should be operational beginning May 1.

"We are also building apartments and townhouses facing the marina, and bungalows facing the golf course.

"We are now in the process of planning for a hotel with 300 rooms, complete with conferencing facilities. With the hotel, we hope to attract more tourists."

On greening the area, Azman said more than 10,000 trees had been planted at Sebana Resort. In addition, about 1,000 mature trees had been shifted there, mostly of the palm varieties.

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