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Mahathir-Tax

NO TAX EXEMPTION FOR SHORT-STAY VISITORS TO LANGKAWI

LANGKAWI, Aug 9 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the government cannot entertain requests for tax exemption for the purchase of goods by visitors who spend less than 72 hours on the island.

He said the government needed the revenue and if the period of stay was reduced there would be requests for further reductions.

"We have already reduced but each time we reduce, there are requests for more reductions. In the end, one need not even come here to get (duty-free goods).

"If we give 48 hours (they) want 24, give 24 hours (they) want 12, then six, and after six hours there is no need to come to buy... all the shops on the mainland can close," he told reporters after inspecting the Langkawi International Shooting Range, here.

He was asked to comment on a suggestion that the period of stay for visitors to qualify to buy duty-free goods in Langkawi be reduced to 48 hours from the current 72. The suggestion was made by the Association of Langkawi Bumiputera Tour Agencies in efforts to draw more visitors to the resort island.

Asked to comment on some tour agents who take tourists to certain tourist spots based on commission, he said he was displeased with such agents who were profiteering.

"Normally we are not too angry when tour agents ask for a commission, but there are those who they ask for too much until they get more than the operators, that is profiteering.

"It's alright when they get a bit like one or 10 per cent but what about agents who get RM2 when the operators get RM1?," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the government would take action in the matter.

Earlier, he inspected several development projects on the island and visited Laman Padi, an agro-based tourist centre in Pantai Chenang comprising a padi museum, tourist information kiosk, restaurant and three pavilions.

He was accompanied by Kedah Menteri Besar Tan Sri Sanusi Junid and Langkawi MP Abu Bakar Taib. -- BERNAMA

NH JM JK