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Website to promote nation's image launched

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MIRI, Thurs. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today launched a website, My Malaysia, which seeks to promote a positive image of the country amid much negative publicity spread through the media and the Internet.

Dr Mahathir is here as part of his whirlwind tour of the country.

Highlights of My Malaysia include "Topic of the Week" and "News Trends" which are a rebuttal of misreporting on Malaysia and carry comments by writers and opinion leaders.

My Malaysia, located at <http://www.mymalaysia.com.my>, has a weekly poll on "Hot Topic of the Week" with results displayed daily.

The website is initiated by a group of concerned individuals and non-governmental organisations, headed by academician Tan Sri Dr Awang Had Salleh.

Awang Had said allegations that the Government practised cronyism, nepotism, and interfered with the judiciary system had to be handled well.

He said an alternative and credible website was needed to counter what he described as laman-laman fitnah, or websites carrying malicious allegations.

My Malaysia targets both the local and world audience, focusing on politics, economy, tourism, human and social rights and science, technology and environment.

Dr Mahathir arrived about 10.30am at the Miri Airport to a rousing welcome.

The website launch was held at Rihga Hotel overlooking the South China Sea. Dr Mahathir last came here in 1997.

Miri is a coastal town famed for its petroleum industry.

The country's first oil well, Well No 1, known as Grand Old Lady which dates back to 1910, is located here. It is now a popular site for tourists.

Miri has a population of more than 200,000 and has some fine houses.

Features common in Miri like spacious compounds were retained in a new township launched by Dr Mahathir later in the day.

Bandar Baru Permyjaya has 2,901 medium- and low-cost houses. The low-cost houses have three rooms with a large compound.

Dr Mahathir, in his speech, commended the developer, Naim Cendera Sdn Bhd, which also built a community hall there.

The Prime Minister made it clear that the Government always sought ways to improve the livelihood of the people.

He said at the height of the economic crisis, the Government continued with housing development programmes, a move which also provided jobs to various other related industries.

Dr Mahathir added that hundreds of thousands of houses were being planned nationwide for the people.

He also explained the need for a State Government run by the same party as at the Federal-level so that there would be co-ordination and co-operation.

At times, cries of "Hidup Mahathir" punctuated his speech.

Once he responded: "Hidup rakyat Sarawak, hidup rakyat Miri ... and in good health."

The huge crowd enjoyed this light-hearted moment.

There were more plans for Miri, Dr Mahathir told the residents.

Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud has a plan to develop Miri into a place like St Antonio in the United States.

Taib, in his speech, urged Dr Mahathir to stay on at the helm and ignore the malicious allegations against him (the Prime Minister).

"We want Dr Mahathir's leadership after enjoying much progress," Taib said.

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