

'Langkawi's' progress no longer dependent on Dr M'

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LANGKAWL **Mon:** Langkawi will run under its own steam even if Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who has been instrumental in the island's progress from sleepy hollow to tourism haven, retires.

Former Langkawi Development Authority (Lada) general manager Datuk Abdul Halil Mutalib said even if Mahathir suddenly decides to focus on other islands or opts for retirement, Langkawi has the means to continue developing.

Its tourism industry, which is the

mainstay of the island's economy, is expected to mature with age, Abdul Halil said during a dinner held to thank him for his contribution in the development of Langkawi over the past decade.

The dinner, attended by over 1,000 community members here, was organised jointly by political parties, government departments, associations and travel trade organisations.

The proceeds will be channelled to welfare organisations.

Abdul Halil was appointed as the

new **Royal Customs** and Excise Department director-general, effective Aug 1.

Abdul Halil's replacement Datuk Zainal Karip Abdul Rahim, 51, called on all sections of the community -- from the public sector to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) -- to help him make Langkawi a success story for the country.

He said the task ahead is daunting but he will emulate Abdul Halil's approach in developing the island resort into a premier international leisure destination.