

16/07/2000

Care for environs, developers told

Tan Chin Siang

KUCHING, Sat. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today declared open the RM500 million Borneo Highlands Resort with a call to developers to always be mindful of the need to preserve the environment when implementing projects.

He said the environment must be cared for so that it could be enjoyed by Malaysians and the world community in perpetuity.

"We have a lot more tourism-related products to be established in Malaysia in the future, but we must be careful that such projects do not destroy the environment."

Dr Mahathir lamented that some developers had in the past expressed concern for the conservation of hilly areas and forests but when the Government gave them the go-ahead to develop these areas, they flattened the hills and cut down the trees instead.

The Borneo Highlands Resort, which is jointly developed by Country Heights Holdings Berhad and the Sarawak Land Custody and Development Authority, is located in the Penrissen Highlands, some 65km from the city.

The Penrissen Highlands on the Sarawak-Kalimantan (Indonesia) border and the highest point is the 1,329m Gunung Penrissen.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia could take pride in the fact that most of its development projects had benefited the locals.

"This is in stark contrast to the situation in certain countries where the locals were displaced from their own land to make way for development.

"I am glad that Lee (Tan Sri Lee Kim Yew, the managing director of CHHB) gave this matter due consideration when establishing this resort.

"I understand that he even has plans to open up a school around here," Dr Mahathir said.

In his speech, Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud commended Lee for doing what "many of us are scared to do".

He said building the resort was an extremely challenging job, especially in relation to logistics.

Lee, in his speech, said the resort would be recognised as one of the best highland resorts in the future.

To ensure that the resort attracts worldwide attention, he plans to use successful marketing models from previous projects such as the Mines Resort City.

In terms of pollution, he said: "Where possible, we will use advances in technology to reduce pollution. I aim to impose non-smoking zone in this entire resort and allow only electrical or solar-powered vehicles to be used," said Lee.

(END)