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PM: Government will consider `tourist city' status for Langkawi

LANGKAWI, Wed. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the Government would consider a request to accord Langkawi `tourism city' status.

"I will talk to the relevant authorities and make them think of it positively on this," he said.

He agreed that the status would further boost tourism development on the resort island.

Dr Mahathir was launching Fiesta Langkawi 2000 here in conjunction with the Langkawi Development Authority's 10th anniversary celebration.

Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain had earlier asked for speedy approval of the status, saying that the conditions could be relaxed.

The Prime Minister also asked the private sector, which had benefited substantially from the tourist island's development, to contribute to efforts to promote Langkawi.

He said tourism-related activities such as the Fiesta Langkawi, were important to promote the island as a leading tourist destination in the world.

The Government, he added, had spent a lot of money to develop the island within a short span.

"We will continue to invest more money and hope the State Government will co-operate in efforts to develop the island."

Dr Mahathir also said that it was not impressive buildings which attracted tourists to Langkawi but its natural beauty and environment.

"We can construct buildings, but it is the lure of Langkawi's natural environment, its legends and the people's warmth that have drawn visitors here.

"It is this unique feature of Langkawi that must be maintained," he said.

He also commended LADA for its hard work over the years, particularly in speeding up the island's development.

Later, Dr Mahathir launched The Legends of Langkawi, authored by Dewan Rakyat Speaker Tun Zahir Ismail. The book contains an anthology of the legends and folklore of Langkawi.

The Prime Minister also met Aishah Nawawi, 14, the seventh generation descendant of Langkawi's legendary beauty Mahsuri, her mother Sumaini Yaji, father Wan Nawawi, and grandfather Wan Hashim. The fiesta will run until June 6.

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