

Langkawi growing out of Mahsuri's curse

STAR

25 MAR 2001

LANGKAWI Some 200 years ago a pretty woman called Mahsuri was unjustly accused of adultery and sentenced to death

According to legend her innocence was proven when white blood streamed from her body when she was executed

Just before her last breath Mahsuri laid a curse on the island denying it peace or prosperity for seven generations

The story of Mahsuri is the best known legend of Langkawi and has been dramatised and written about many times

Her name remains as magnetic as ever today attracting visitors to Langkawi where her grave lies in Ulu Melaka

Whether it's fact or fiction seven generations have passed since Mahsuri's death

and Langkawi has definitely grown out of her curse The island has become a premier tourist destination in the region

In fact Langkawi's growth has been remarkable over the last decade with hotels and resorts mushrooming across the island

Last year the island recorded its largest number of arrivals with 1.81 million people bringing the total to over 10 million visitors since 1987 when it was given duty free status

Langkawi Municipal Council president Datuk Ismail Hamid credited Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for the island's stupendous growth

He said the island of 70,000 people was geared for further growth with a proposed RM46mil cable car project at the Gunung Matchincang

range already in the works

Ismail said Langkawi's natural beauty would be maintained as this was its main asset and assured the people that there would be no increase in assessment rates, rentals and other fees with its elevation in status

Old timer Mohamed Osman, 70, said there had been tremendous change in Langkawi especially in the 1990s when more hotels, motels and other buildings were built

He recalled that most roads here were untarred in the 1970s and only paved a decade later

Another tourist attraction — the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition — will be held for the sixth time in October this year since the biennial event started in 1991