

PM slams unscrupulous hotels

STAR

26 FEB 2007

JOHOR BARU: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has criticised hotels for increasing room rates during international events and said the Government is considering the imposition of a levy on such hotels.

He said that hoteliers and tourism industry players were direct beneficiaries of international events organised by the Government and yet their contributions were minimal.

He said their move to mark up room rates could have a negative impact on the foreign attendance at world-class events.

"I was told that room rates

were expensive during the F1 Power Boat championship although hotels did not contribute directly to the event.

"I feel we should impose a levy of some sort on the hotels," he said after witnessing the inaugural Johor leg of the UIM Formula 1 Power Boat championship which was launched by the Tunku Mahkota of Johor, Tunku Ibrahim Ismail.

Also present at the event were the Regent of Selangor Tengku Idris Shah, Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman, Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Hisham-

muddin Tun Hussein, dignitaries and a crowd of about 50,000.

The event was broadcast "live" to 500 million viewers in 58 countries.

Hotels ranked four-star and above charged a flat US\$100 (RM380) for a standard room during the three-day event compared to their normal rates of between RM150 and RM180 a night.

He expressed confidence that many tourists would want to visit Malaysia after watching such events on television and this would benefit the country, particularly the tourism industry.