

09/07/2001

PM lauds environment-conscious developers

LANGKAWI, Sun. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today he was happy with developers of the various tourism projects on the resort island who carried out their projects without damaging the environment.

"Everywhere we go, the forests are not cleared ... even here, we are sitting in a mangrove area," he said at the Barn Thai restaurant which is located within a mangrove area on the banks of Sungai Kisap.

The Prime Minister, who is here for a one-day visit, said the Berjaya Langkawi Beach and Spa Resort also had plans to build more rooms without felling trees.

"I was told the Berjaya hotel is adding 100 more rooms and this will be done without felling the trees in the area.

"So I think they too are sensitive to the environment," he added.

The Prime Minister, who visited several on-going tourism project sites and places with tourism potential on the island earlier, said he was captivated with the varied tourism products of the island.

He said the unique features of some of these products had turned them into popular tourist attractions and this was positive to Langkawi as a tourism island and city.

"The only thing now is that people are complaining they do not know what to do at night, except to watch television," he said in jest.

Dr Mahathir said except for the yacht repair centre project in Tanjong Lembong, which did not take shape since its launch last April, he was satisfied with the progress of the other on-going projects.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir visited the RM45 million cable car project site near the Oriental Village at the foot of Gunung Machincang which is now 28 per cent complete.

When completed in May next year, visitors can ride in a six-seater gondola type car up the 708m mountain.

The Prime Minister also checked the development of the RM29.6 million rehabilitation and breakwater project in Pantai Kok which is 73 per cent complete.

He also made a brief stop at the Sungai Kuala Melaka beautification project site before proceeding to Morac International Karting Circuit in Pantai Cenang.

The tracks are being extended and construction of new facilities including a mini grandstand capable of accommodating 600 spectators are on-going. The venue is being prepared for the Rotax World Final in January.

Later, Dr Mahathir took a boat ride along Sungai Kilim which passes through Gua Kelewar permanent forest reserve and to watch the feeding of eagles.

He also stopped by Galeria Perdana where more than 3,000 items which he and his wife Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali received as gifts over the years.

Speaking to reporters later, Dr Mahathir said next year's budget would ensure that money spent on development of the country would benefit the people.

"We want to concentrate on promoting local investments as we can no longer depend on foreign investors who are now concentrating on China where things are cheaper," he added.

(END)

