

# Dr M: Langkawi has come a long way

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LANGKAWI: There were only two cars here back in 1956 - one which was government-owned while the other belonged to the Sungai Raya estate manager.

The government car was driven by Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, then the government doctor based on the island.

Recalling his days here, the Prime Minister said there was only a 4.8km tarred road in the whole island then and there were houses which had walls made of tree bark.

Langkawi was then the most

backward district in Kedah and its small population was involved in the fishing, salted fish and *belacan* industry, he noted.

He said the local folk, numbering about 70,000 now, had since benefited a lot from tourism.

"Langkawi's growth has been extraordinary. Our aim to develop Langkawi has been achieved," Dr Mahathir said here yesterday.

He, however, said there was more development which had not been completed, adding: "There are many more plans."

Local folk and traders strung out banners to thank the Prime Minister in conjunction with his visit here.

Thousands turned up for a "Thank You Prime Minister" gathering at the Mahsuri Hall in Padang Matsirat last night to show their appreciation to Dr Mahathir. The Prime Minister attended five functions here yesterday including a dialogue with department heads, teachers and representatives from the private sector.