

'Foreign yachtsmen can help promote Malaysia'

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LANGKAWI: Foreign yachtsmen plying the regional coastal waters can play a role in helping promote the country as a safe destination to counter negative travel advisories by a number of Western nations.

Royal Langkawi Yacht Club (RLYC) chairman/commodore Tunku Tan Sri Abdullah Tuanku Abdul Rahman said the yachtsmen could help Malaysia deflect such negative misconceptions about the country by word of mouth.

"They travel around and see the country with their own eyes. Therefore, they can inform their fellow countrymen back home about how safe and beautiful the country is," Tunku Abdullah said at a press conference at the RLYC here.

Tunku Abdullah said this in response to a question on whether the recent Bali terrorism attack would have an effect on response towards the inaugural Royal Langkawi International Regatta scheduled to be held on March 11-16 next year.

The press conference was held

to announce details of the international regatta, organised for the first time by the club.

Present were RLYC general manager Wicky Sundram and its regatta manager Robert Forrester.

Tunku Abdullah said the regatta would have a Prime Minister's Challenge Trophy in honour of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's invaluable contributions to the island resort.

"Since Dr Mahathir is expected to retire next year in October, the yacht club felt it was suitable to organise a race of international standing in his honour," he said.

Dr Mahathir is scheduled to open the regatta following the completion of RLYC's new seawall and the construction of additional 157 berths.

Between 50 and 60 yachts are expected to participate in the regatta and the RLYC hopes to also parade an Under-20 yachting team and all-women local and international teams as part of efforts to promote yachting.