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Dr Mahathir: Langkawi will not be neglected

LANGKAWI, Sun. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the people need not fear that Langkawi would be neglected after he stepped down.

Expressing confidence that the people in Langkawi would continue to develop the island, Dr Mahathir said: "I can tell you all that Mahsuri's curse will never return to Langkawi."

According to folklore, Langkawi was cursed by a beautiful maiden named Mahsuri after she was wrongfully accused of adultery and sentenced to die.

Before she was put to death, Mahsuri had said that there would be no development in Langkawi for seven generations after her death.

Dr Mahathir said Langkawi was very backward when he first came to the island.

The Prime Minister said he was posted to Langkawi in 1956 where he served as a doctor for six months. He was captivated by Langkawi's beauty, and the island has held a special place in his heart ever since.

"I always feel happy being here, whether it is to rest or work.

"I'm also happy to see the development that has taken place here," he said, adding that developing Langkawi was one of the most meaningful decisions he had made.

Dr Mahathir was speaking on the Langkawi International Airport tarmac after arriving here for a short visit to the island.

He was enroute to Kuala Lumpur from Bangkok.

He was greeted at the airport by about 1,000 well-wishers.

Also present were his wife, Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain, Langkawi Member of Parliament Datuk Abu Bakar Taib, Kuah Assemblyman Tan Sri Sanusi Junid who is the State's former Menteri Besar, and another former Menteri Besar, Tan Sri Osman Aroff.

Dr Mahathir said he would never forget Langkawi and would continue to visit the island even after he retired next year.

"My doctor says coming here is good for my health as even my high blood pressure becomes low when I'm here.

"So this island is the best cure for me."

The Prime Minister later checked on the progress of several projects, including the cable car project, the Oriental Village and Harbour Park at Teluk Burau.