

01 AUG 2002

Mahathir-Projects

DR M VISITS TOURIST PROJECTS BEFORE PROCEEDING TO LID 2002

LANGKAWI, Aug 1 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who arrived here today to open and attend the Global 2002 Smart Partnership International Dialogue, managed to squeeze some time from his busy schedule this morning to make brief visits to two tourist projects in Burau Bay.

Shortly after arriving at the Langkawi International Airport, the Prime Minister drove a mini four-wheel-drive vehicle to Oriental Village near Berjaya Beach and Spa Resort to inspect the Langkawi cable car project.

From there, Dr Mahathir took a 2.2km ride in a gondola-shaped cable car together with five other officials, including Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain and the project consultant, Dr Peter A. Wyss, to the peak of Gunung Machinchang, about 708 metres above sea level.

Dr Mahathir spent some time at the peak to have a closer look at the project and was briefed on its progress.

The Prime Minister himself had mooted the idea for the project when he flew over Gunung Machinchang in a helicopter in 1999.

The RM46 million project, which is 95 per cent completed, is expected to be operational by end of this month. It already has a certified Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report.

Visitors can enjoy a panoramic view of the island by taking a 15-minute ride to the peak.

Langkawi Development Authority's (Lada) Technical Manager, Abdul Manaf Majid, said an independent tester from Austria has been conducting trial runs of the cable car service.

The trial runs are scheduled to end on Sunday.

Abdul Manaf said the cable car service would be managed by a Lada subsidiary, Langkawi Cable Car Sdn Bhd.

There are three points for passengers to get on to the cable car - at the ground, middle and peak stations.

The 35 six-seater cable cars travel 70m above the rainforest in the Machinchang Range, which is also rich in geological features.

They have a maximum capacity to ferry 700 passengers per hour.

From Oriental Village, Dr Mahathir proceeded to the Langkawi Harbour Park Project in Pantai Kok, where he was briefed on the progress by project consultant and mariner, Datuk Azhar Mansor.

The project will feature a Mediterranean concept of development, which will consist of a marina, which can accommodate 100 yachts at one time, boutique hotels and apartments.

The Prime Minister then left for Pelangi Beach Resort in Pantai Chenang, the venue of the Global 2002 Smart Partnership International Dialogue, which encompasses the Langkawi International Dialogue, Southern Africa International Dialogue and Eastern Africa International Dialogue.

Shortly after his arrival at the hotel, Dr Mahathir received a call from the President of Namibia Dr Sam Nujoma.

-- BERNAMA

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