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Editor's note

SINCE the 1980s at the cajoling and influence of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Pulau Langkawi has never looked back as a prime Malaysian tourism destination. The superstitious say Langkawi's prosperity was only possible with the "expiry" of Mahsuri's curse. Perhaps the fortuitious confluence of the two forces has enabled this chain of islands off the northwest coast of the peninsula to awaken from its deep economic and development slumber. Today we see the directly opposite effect. Although the main island is no longer lacking in hotels, resorts, parks, shopping complexes and all kinds of amenities, many tourism operators still see fit to come up with new developments, the latest of which is MK Land's sprawling Langkawi Resort Lagoon by the Andaman Sea. The more the merrier, so they say. And why not if it adds to Langkawi's pulling power for even the most attractive destination anywhere cannot afford to stand still and neglect expansion, improvement and enhancement of its attractions given the stiff competition these days for the leisure seeker's time and money. Langkawi Resort Lagoon's rationale of adding spice to the resort sector makes sense for both the developer and the island. There is an interesting twist to this development. Those fortunate enough to have a couple of million Ringgit to spare, for instance, can actually own an at-sea bungalow outright. Talk about extending the choice for vacationers!

The backwater town of Grik, in the deep interiors of Perak, also get our attention this week. Grik's destiny has more recently become intertwined with the picturesque East-West Highway which offers a scenic link across northern Peninsular Malaysia. This is a welcomed change indeed, considering that not too long ago, a posting to the town would have been met with apprehension because of the communist threat. And just two years ago the unfortunate Sauk incident involving an arms heist by religious extremists occurred in the vicinity. After all the excitement, Grik deserves to return to its sleepy status but perhaps with more than a trickle of visitors deign to explore the town. Grik hopes to make this detour as interesting as possible.