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Mahathir-Tioman

TAKE INTO ACCOUNT NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN TIOMAN'S DEVELOPMENT, SAYS PM

PUTRAJAYA, Oct 29 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the development of Tioman must be implemented wisely, taking into account the natural environment which has attracted tourists to the resort island.

The Prime Minister said that he did not wish to see development resulting in the destruction of plants and vegetation, the beaches and coastline and the marine life in waters off the island said to be among the world's best.

"All these have to be preserved properly because they are what attract tourists to Tioman island," he said through video conferencing during the ground-breaking ceremony at the site of the new airport on the island, at Kampung Paya.

Dr Mahathir said that the government was prepared to spend over RM100 million for the construction of the airport just to develop the tourism industry which would hopefully improve the income and standard of living of the people of Tioman island.

The new airport, designed to accommodate bigger aircraft like the Boeing 737, will facilitate travel to the resort island which now has an airstrip at Kampung Tekek.

Dr Mahathir said that the beauty of Tioman would be meaningless if it cannot be enjoyed by more people.

"As such, we have to make a little sacrifice affecting a small part of the island to build the airport so that the greater part of the island could be enjoyed by more visitors," he said.

He believed that the island, which has also been accorded duty free status, would see rapid development like Langkawi which was previously among the most backward places in the country.

"I am confident that Tioman island could be developed rapidly and the residents could benefit more from its development," he said.

Present were Works minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu and Second Finance Minister Datuk Dr Jamaludin Jarjis.

-- BERNAMA

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