

27 SEP 2003

Mahathir-Langkawi

YACHT OWNERS EXPRESS INTEREST IN LANGKAWI, SAYS DR M

By: Jackson Sawatan

MONACO, Sept 27 (Bernama) -- Yacht owners participating in the Monaco Yacht Show 2003 have expressed interest to come to Malaysia and see for themselves the yachting facilities available in the country, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

"I met some of the yacht owners. They want to come to Malaysia to see for themselves the situation in our country.

"Many people who came for the launching of the Langkawi Yacht registration yesterday are luxury vessel magazine journalists.

"They pledged to help give publicity to Malaysia and the Langkawi Yacht Registration," he told Malaysian journalists at the end of his two-day visit to Monaco.

He said that yachts registered in Langkawi would carry the Malaysian flag as well as the name "Langkawi" written on the yacht, and this would help popularise Malaysia and its tourism industry.

"As you can see in the Mediterranean, there are lots and lots of yachts and they belonged to very rich people. The reason why countries welcome shows like the Monaco Yacht Show is because it gives strong push to the tourism industry," he said.

He said it was not Malaysia's intention to make profits from the registration of yachts in Langkawi.

"Our aim is to promote Malaysia and Langkawi. All the yachts registered in Langkawi will carry our flag and that itself is a promotion for Langkawi," he said.

He also said plans are afoot to promote the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace (LIMA) Exhibition among the international yachting community so that more mega yachts would come to the island.

Asked whether Langkawi would one day become a premier destination for the world yachting community like Monte Carlo in Monaco, Dr Mahathir said: "Yes, it will be like Monte Carlo, minus the casino."

After the news conference, Dr Mahathir and his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, continued their tour on the final day of the five-day Monaco Yacht Show 2003.

They later proceeded by road to the nearby Nice Airport in France in the afternoon to board a special aircraft to return home.

Present at the airport to see them off were Malaysian Ambassador to France Tunku Datuk Nazihah Tunku Mohamed Ros and Defence Attache at the Malaysian Embassy in France Kapt Musa Omar.

-- BERNAMA

JS HK TS