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Squid catching has big potential, says Dr M

LANGKAWI, Tues. - With almost child-like glee, former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad described his experience catching squid off the coast of Pantai Cenang last night, saying the activity held enormous tourism potential.

"I caught plenty of squid in a matter of seconds," he said. "We chartered a small boat and I caught more than eight kilogrammes."

Dr Mahathir and his entourage went squid-catching at 11.45pm in waters between Pulau Rebak and Pulau Tepor in the Andaman sea, five kilometres off the coast of Pantai Cenang.

"I do not know why travel agents are not promoting this activity, especially during this time of year, which is the season for catching squid," he said.

"We should promote it to the Japanese as they are fond of eating squid."

The experience was one of a kind, Dr Mahathir said, as the sight of small fishing boats with a single bright light used to attract squid made it look like a water village.

He was speaking after launching the Emkay Group of Companies Excellence in Sports programme at the company's driving range in Kuala Melaka, here.

Travel agents, Dr Mahathir said, should be more creative in developing tourism packages.

"Just a few days ago, I went to this fish farm where you can feed stingray," he said. "They came out of the water and snapped the food straight out of my hand. I don't think you can find this anywhere else."

"We have the most beautiful mangrove swamps and also places where you can watch eagles gather and see monkeys in the wild."

On new tourism projects, Dr Mahathir, who is also Langkawi Development Authority (Lada) adviser, said Harbour Park near Pantai Kok would be developed into a township with facilities to attract yachting and boating enthusiasts.

Three hotels will be built in Pantai Kok to cater to tourists of all budgets.

A Customs and Immigration office and yacht registration office will also be opened at the park's marina.