

09/02/2003

Dr M to consider proposal to name candidates early

LANGKAWI, Sat. - Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said that he would consider the proposal by Kelantan Umno to name their candidates for the general election earlier than is normally done.

Dr Mahathir, who as Barisan Nasional chairman has the final say on all BN candidates, also refused to elaborate further on the merits of the proposal.

"I'll think about it lah, wait and I will pikiaq (fikir or think), as Kedah people will say," he said today when asked whether he agreed with the proposal.

The Prime Minister said this after inspecting progress on efforts to further develop the Gunung Machinchang cable car project here.

Kelantan Umno liaison committee chairman Datuk Mustapa Mohamed was quoted as saying that the idea was forwarded by several party leaders and that many division chiefs, including the State liaison committee, agreed to the suggestion.

Mustapa said many viewed the suggestion, which would require the approval of the party leadership, as being able to provide Umno an advantage in the next general election.

Dr Mahathir, who arrived at the Langkawi International airport at 11.15pm last night, visited several other development and tourism projects on the island.

He boarded a helicopter from the Tok Senik resort where he spent the night and went to Kuala Kedah to inspect the Marina Harbour project there.

In Kuala Kedah, Dr Mahathir took a boat ride for a look at the project's surroundings.

The RM26 million project began construction in June last year and is expected to be completed by April.

The 16ha site, which will be able to dock 44 boats, has a twostorey clubhouse with recreational and business suite facilities.

Dr Mahathir was given a briefing by project manager Ahmad Kamal Yaacob.

Ahmad Kamal said the project, undertaken by BF Intra Sdn Bhd, was about 65 per cent complete.

Present were Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain and Agriculture Ministry parliamentary secretary Datuk Abu Bakar Taib, who is also MP for Langkawi.

Dr Mahathir then returned to Langkawi, landing at Pantai Kok where he spent 30 minutes touring the ongoing Harbour Park Langkawi project.

The RM40 million project boasts a 100-yacht marina, a hotel and apartments to be situated on a 12ha site.

The Prime Minister was briefed on the project by its consultant, Datuk Azhar Mansor.

Dr Mahathir then went to the Gunung Machinchang cable car project, where he was briefed by project consultant Dr Peter A. Wyss on a proposal to build a suspension bridge at the site.

In the afternoon, Dr Mahathir surveyed the construction of two new blocks at Galleria Perdana, which is where all the gifts and souvenirs which the Prime Minister had received are kept and displayed.

Dr Mahathir then visited the rehabilitation of a mangrove area located near Sungai Kilim.

The Prime Minister also spent some time at the Tanjung Rhu beach before going to the Wave-Master-Langkawi Yacht centre at Tanjung Lembong before

boarding a luxury yacht and heading out to sea.