

26/02/2003

Dr M to launch five-star Langkawi Lagoon beach resort on Saturday

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LANGKAWI, Tues. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will launch Langkawi's newest five-star beach resort, the Langkawi Lagoon, on Saturday.

The event will also be an opportunity for Malaysia to show the world that it remains a safe tourist destination, resort developer MK Land Holdings Bhd executive chairman Tan Sri Mustapha Kamal said.

The ambassadors of 18 countries to Malaysia have confirmed their attendance, while about 200 tourism trade personnel, including writers, agents and airline officials, will also be present to witness the launch.

"It will be a platform to sell Langkawi and Langkawi Lagoon to the world, and to show them we are still a safe holiday destination," Mustapha said at a Press conference at the resort today.

"There has been a lot of fear about holidaying in this region after the Bali bombings. Foreigners still think that this region is unsafe."

Among the embassy representatives attending are those from Norway, Italy, Belgium, France, Switzerland, Oman, United Arab Emirates, Palestine and South Africa.

They will arrive on Friday for a threeday stay and will participate in tours of the island, Mustapha said.

"What we want to sell them are experiences, not just products," he said.

"They will take these memories back to their countries and help promote Langkawi."

Phase One of Langkawi Lagoon, costing RM100 million, will be launched on Saturday. It consists of 96 hotel suites, 78 sea villas and four sea bungalows.

The sea villas and bungalows are the resort's most unique features designed after traditional Malay kampung houses on stilts over the sea. These units are built within a 2.7-kilometre breakwater structure that forms the resort's lagoon.

The other phases of the resort are expected to be completed over a period of 10 years, eventually covering an area of about 23 hectares.

All the resort's units are also for property investment. All hotel suites and most of the villas have been sold.

Purchases operate on a guaranteed return rental scheme.

The resort, which opened last June, has seen an occupancy rate of about 60 per cent in the last three months, Mustapha said.

It is located near Padang Matsirat and is five minutes' drive from the Langkawi International Airport.

The launch will be a two-day affair beginning on Friday, with dozens of activities for tourists and the local community.

On Friday, the Kuala Melaka River Park next to the resort will be the site of a bazaar, food and handi-craft stalls, colouring contest and remote car racing competitions.

There will also be traditional Malay folk dances, martial arts and sports like sepak takraw. At night, popular comedy group Senario will provide entertainment.

On Saturday, the breakwater structure will be a hive of activity with more bazaars, food stalls, performances and kite-flying.

A fishing competition, the Joran Perdana organised by Berita Harian, will also be held at the breakwater on Saturday morning.

Mustapha stressed the importance of engaging the local community in the

resorts activities. He said Langkawi Lagoon's strategic location next to the river mouth of Sungai Melaka would be able to create tourism activities that the locals could run.

He said MK Land was working closely with the Langkawi Development Authority to open the area as a new tourist attraction.