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Dr M welcomes yacht owners, builders to Langkawi

Ahmad A. Talib

AMIDST a picture-perfect setting of white-coloured yachts and blue sky, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad officiated at the soft launch of the Langkawi Yacht Registrar.

The Prime Minister said yacht owners can get the best competitive service from the facility.

Appropriately, the launch was held on board a luxury yacht, Sweet Doll, and accompanied by a cultural show and video presentation on Langkawi. Five French youths impressed the audience with their display of silat skills.

The official launching of the Langkawi Registrar will be held during the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace exhibition starting next week. (See also P4)

Dr Mahathir, in his speech, welcomed yacht owners and builders to Langkawi as Malaysia is safe and reliable.

"The Langkawi Registrar is exclusive for yachts only, and this should please yacht owners."

He spent several hours at the Monaco Yacht Show, held every year as a showcase of simple and luxury yachts. Owners and builders display their yachts for the world's rich and famous.

Dr Mahathir urged yacht owners to make use of the Langkawi Registrar, have their boats registered in Malaysia and to sail them over to Langkawi.

The island, he said, had marinas equipped with facilities comparable with resort cities in the Mediterranean.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia's year-round sunshine and multi-racial society provided yacht owners and builders a value-added advantage.

He described how Malaysians of different racial and religious backgrounds live in harmony where festivals are celebrated by all. The country is also free of natural calamities like typhoons and earthquakes.

"We are promoting yachting as a hobby in Malaysia. We have built a few marinas and now we have the facility to register boats and yachts from all over the world."

He assured yacht owners that the facility would be run by people with lots of experience in registering yachts and ships in the West Indies, hence quality service could be expected.

Elaborating on security in Malaysia, Dr Mahathir said despite some governments issuing travel advisories advising their citizens against visiting the country, Malaysia is actually a safe place to visit.

Although there were reports that the Straits of Malacca was unsafe due to piracy, he said the Government has always ensured the safety of ships plying Malaysian waters.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia has a radar system capable of tracking all vessels using the straits while the authorities conduct regular patrols.

The Prime Minister also said that tourists would find it much cheaper to visit Malaysia compared with other countries.