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Editor's note

LEGENDS abound in Langkawi - to the extent that if you are a believer, the island's present day prosperity can easily be accounted for. Mahsuri's curse on the island, going by folklore general calculations, has been lifted. Hence the rosy situation. By happy coincidence, one man in a position of great influence with powerful persuasion has also been working hard to turn a once sleepy backwater and somewhat isolated island into a powerhouse of tourism. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mohamad Mahathir, as the country has come to know and respect, isn't someone who take half measures. It is fitting that in this issue of Travel Times, coming out on his last day of office, our main feature puts the spotlight on Langkawi once again. This isn't just a recap of the remarkable depth and breadth of the island's attractions which owe a huge debt to Dr Mahathir's ceaseless effort in that direction. When one takes in the variety of accommodation catering to the extra thrifty as well as the super rich, plus all the facilities to make the visitor's stay enjoyable and rewarding already put in place, the next question is: What else would Langkawi be able to offer and continue defining its success? The strategy for the island's progress is obviously not to leave any stone unturned.

Having by any yardstick arrived at "mission accomplished" in general tourism term for Langkawi, the tireless Prime Minister recently accomplished yet another goal set for the island when he launched the Langkawi Yacht Registry at the recent maritime and air exhibition on the island after giving the world's yachting elite a preview of sorts in Monaco a month earlier. This certainly is the style of a man fully committed to a cause and aiming for nothing but the highest level of attainment. Langkawi is certainly ripe to entertain the rich and famous of the yachting fraternity. For a not particularly imposing island, Langkawi now boasts four superb marinas with the latest being Telaga Harbour Park at Pantai Kok opened during the same exhibition. The new pride of Langkawi's maritime ambition when fully completed will have a six-storey lighthouse, Customs and Immigration complex, a condominium block and boutique hotel to complement its 100-berth marina. The other three call centres for roving yachts are the Royal Langkawi Yacht Club, Rebak Marina Resort and Awana Porto Malai Resort. While the last has comparatively limited berth space, it has the distinction of being Star Cruises port of call and the place where Datuk Azhar Mansor started and ended his solo sail mission around the world. Rebak, meanwhile, has a hardstand of 70 dry bays. Certainly everything needed to put Langkawi on the world yachting map is in place - just what the doctor ordered to build a good maritime reputation.