

02/03/2003

PM conceived environmentally friendly resort

LANGKAWI, Sat. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was credited as the person who conceived the idea for the RM100 million five-star Langkawi Lagoon Resort in Padang Matsirat here today.

The resort, which incorporates an architectural blend of the Malay kampung house and kelong (a traditional fishing platform), was developed by Tema Teladan Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of MK Land Holdings Bhd.

MK Land Holdings executive chairman Tan Sri Mustapha Kamal Abu Bakar said the Prime Minister suggested that the resort be built in an environmentally friendly way as he was unhappy about seafront projects damaging the surrounding environment.

"We responded by building on the sea using stilts, recreating a mixture between a Malay village and kelong," he said at the opening of the resort today.

As the resort is located near Sungai Melaka, Mustapha Kamal said Dr Mahathir suggested it incorporate designs of traditional shophouses in Malacca's Jonker Street.

Mustapha Kamal also invited tourism operators to help MK Land popularise the adjacent Kuala Melaka River Park, built by the Langkawi Development Authority and completed early last year.

He said the Langkawi Development Authority (Lada) had asked MK Land to manage the park, which had a network of wooden boardwalks, a lookout tower over the mangrove swamp, a 5km jogging and cycling track, and several Malay-style open-air halls.

"We plan to organise traditional activities, competitions and sporting programmes as well as cultural performances to allow tourists to sample the local lifestyle."

The resort, which had its soft opening in April last year, is the company's third resort after Bukit Merah Laketown Resort and Taiping Golf Resort.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir, accompanied by Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, opened the Joran Perdana fishing competition organised by Berita Harian.

The Prime Minister and Dr Siti Hasmah also tried their hand at fishing before heading to the resort's Rajawali restaurant to meet 21 children from the Langkawi Development Centre for the Special Children.

While Dr Siti Hasmah joined the children for brunch, Dr Mahathir boarded a boat to visit a nearby floating fish hatchery managed by the resort.

Dr Mahathir later attended the groundbreaking ceremony of the Second Phase of the Underwater World Langkawi in Pantai Cenang.