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MAHATHIR-CENTRE
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KUALA LUMPUR, SEPT 16 (BERNAMA) -- THE ISLAMIC CENTRE THAT DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD OPENED TODAY IS NOT ONLY UNIQUE IN ITS ARCHITECTURE BUT ALSO SYMBOLISES THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT TO UPGRADE THE PROPAGATION OF ISLAM IN THE COUNTRY.

THE BUILDING NOW ACCOMMODATES THE 603 STAFF MEMBERS OF THE ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS DIVISION, ONE OF THE BIGGEST DEPARTMENTS UNDER THE PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT.

THE PUBLIC VISITING THE CENTRE AND VIPS AT THE OPENING CEREMONY WERE AWED BY THE ARCHITECTURE AND BEAUTY OF THE BUILDING.

THE PRIME MINISTER HIMSELF, WHEN OPENING THE CENTRE, COMMENDED THE ARCHITECTS FROM KUMPULAN SENIREKA SDN BHD FOR THEIR SUCCESS IN PUTTING UP A UNIQUE BUILDING AND AT THE SAME TIME FULFILLING THE NEEDS OF AN IMPORTANT DEPARTMENT IN RELIGIOUS ADMINISTRATION.

HE DREW ATTENTION TO THE STAINED GLASS ON THE MAIN DOOR OF THE BUILDING WHICH ARE SIMILAR TO THE ONES MOUNTED ON THE WINDOWS OF THE NABAWAI MOSQUE FACING PROPHET MUHAMMAD'S MAUSOLEUM AND AT THE ZAHIR MOSQUE IN ALOR SETAR.

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MAHATHIR-CENTRE 2 KUALA LUMPUR

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE DIVISION HAD GROWN NOT ONLY IN THE NUMBER OF ITS EMPLOYEES BUT ALSO IN ITS DUTIES IN MATTERS RELATED TO THE MANAGEMENT OF ISLAM IN THE COUNTRY.

THE ISLAMIC CENTRE WAS BUILT TO MEET THIS NEED BECAUSE A BUILDING PREVIOUSLY CONSTRUCTED TO HOUSE THE DIVISION DID NOT HAVE THE NEEDED SPACE AND WAS NOT COMMENSURATE WITH THE STATUS OF ISLAM AS THE OFFICIAL RELIGION OF THE COUNTRY.

THE RELIGIOUS DIVISION, STARTED 15 YEARS AGO WITH A STAFF OF EIGHT, BECAME THE SECRETARIAT FOR THE NATIONAL RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS COUNCIL, PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT, IN 1970. -- BERNAMA

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