

Mahathir: KL can be No 1 shopping destination

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — Kuala Lumpur can replace Singapore as the top shopping destination in the region as it offers cheaper goods, the Prime Minister said tonight.

He said there should be a "reversal in the flow of shoppers and tourists" going to Singapore now that Kuala Lumpur could boast one of the best shopping and entertainment complexes in the region.

"We know that people go to Singapore because of cheap and a wide variety in goods but this is no longer true.

"Kuala Lumpur now has cheaper and a wide variety for the needs of its population, estimated at more than one million, and the shopping tourists.

"We want to see more people from Singapore coming here to shop," Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad added when opening *The Mall*.

Dr Mahathir also hoped that the owners of *The Mall*, Metroplex Holdings Sdn Bhd, would hold an extensive advertising campaign to attract people and tourists to the Federal capital.

"We have many shopping centres in Kuala Lumpur but still lacked the shoppers

although there are more than two million people in the Klang Valley.

"To attract these people and tourists, there is a need for a promotional campaign about the facilities and goods available," he added.

Dr Mahathir was also glad that *The Mall* had replaced what used to be a squatter area and provided opportunities for other businesses in the vicinity.

"With the Putra World Trade Centre, the Pan-Pacific Hotel and now *The Mall* — all three complimenting each other — I hope the business community in the Chow Kit and Jalan Raja Laut area would benefit," said Dr Mahathir.

Earlier, Metroplex Holdings chairman Tunku Idris Shah Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah said that the holding company would do its best to help boost the tourist industry through *The Mall*.

Tunku Idris, who is the Raja Muda of Selangor, said the company spent \$189 million to build *The Mall* which also housed the "Merdan Hang Tuah" — a collection of hawker stalls built to reflect Malaysian history and culture.

Dr Mahathir and Datin

Seri Dr Siti Hasmah were greeted on arrival by 40 children dressed in various national costumes waving miniature flags of Malaysia and Japan.

They were treated to a peacock dance by the husband and wife team of Sivadadas and Vatsala, Chinese lion and dragon dance, and the Punjabi Bhangra Dance Troupe.

Dr Mahathir also sealed a pewter time-capsule with a special message from him to the future generations in Kuala Lumpur. The capsule would be opened in 2087.

More than 3,000 guests, including Cabinet Ministers, foreign dignitaries, captains of finance and industry and special guests from all over Asia, witnessed the opening and were entertained to a light display at *The Mall's* atrium.