

# PM launches educational, technology centre in Penang

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday performed the ground-breaking ceremony of the Penang International Education and Technology Centre (PIETC) at Bukit Jambul in Penang.

Also present were Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Finance Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, Chief Minister Dr Koh Tsu Koon, Deputy Health Minister Datuk Farid Ariffin and Deputy Chief Minister Dr Ibrahim Saad.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir unveiled the PIETC plaque and after the ground-breaking ceremony, watered a tree planted to commemorate his visit to the centre.

The Prime Minister was then given a briefing on PIETC, a component of a comprehensive Bukit Jambul development to be undertaken by Worldwide Ventures Sdn Bhd, a joint venture between IJM Corporation Bhd and the Penang Development Corporation (PDC).

Koh said the ceremony marked the beginning of a marriage between an educational institution and the de-



□ DR MAHATHIR

velopment of manpower resources which will benefit not only Penang but also the northern region of the peninsula as well as the whole country.

He said it is a tripartite partnership among the private, public and academic sectors.

PIETC, an integral component of Bukit Jambul development, will also include a satellite township. It will consist of several compo-

nents, such as centres of learning and research, an information resource centre and training for enhancing information technology.

PDC has set aside a 96.8 ha site to Worldwide Ventures through an agreement signed last September.

PIETC will take up 13.9 ha while the remaining 83 ha will be developed into the satellite township to be known as Bukit Jambul Indah.

This will be developed in four stages including the construction of 2,600 units of low-cost flats, low-medium cost apartments, condominiums, townhouses, bungalows as well as shophouses, offices and recreational facilities.

Tan Sri Murad Mohamad Noor, chairman of Sheffield Enterprise Sdn Bhd which will manage PIETC, said the estimated cost for the entire project is \$450 million.

"Construction will begin next year and the township is expected to be ready within 7 to 10 years," he said.

PIETC will initially consist of two elements — EDTEC College for pre-matriculation and undergraduate

studies and an Information Technology Centre (ITC).

EDTEC College, with academic and technical assistance from the University of Sydney, will provide internationally accredited undergraduate education on a twinning basis. The first courses available will lead towards Bachelor degrees in commerce and economics.

ITC will focus on information technology studies and training, including human resource development, for Penang's high technology manufacturing and processing industries.

Dr Mahathir also attended a closed door briefing on the state's infrastructure projects by State Secretary Datuk Abdul Halim Abdullah and PDC general manager Datuk Mohhtar Haniff at Komtar.

Before adjourning for lunch, the Prime Minister also participated in constructing a Malaysian flag out of Lego pieces at the Komtar concourse. The project is organised by the Penang Rotary Club for charity in conjunction with Merdeka Day celebrations here. — NST