

Towering into historic stage of telecommunications era

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By Nuraina Samad

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. — The Kuala Lumpur Tower will be a multi-purpose structure equipped with the latest and most sophisticated technology, enabling the country "to enter the final stage of the telecommunications era", Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"That is our objective," he told reporters after officiating at the construction of the tower's "superstructure" in Bukit Nanas here.

Dr Mahathir said the tower would have facilities which could even be used to communicate with ships in the Straits of Malacca.

He said he was very pleased with the progress of

the project which employs sophisticated technology.

"High-level techniques are required because the tower is not of one size . . . it gets smaller as it ascends. When cement is poured, it cannot stop until it reaches the peak. This is a technique which we have not seen," he said.

Dr Mahathir hoped that local engineers, architects and contractors will "observe" the methods employed in the construction of the tower.

"Transfer of technology cannot occur by just surrendering the technology. We must be prepared to learn (the technology)," he said.

The RM270 million project is being undertaken by Syarikat Menara Kuala

Lumpur Sdn Bhd, a joint venture between Telekom Enterprise (a subsidiary of Telekom Malaysia) and a German company, Wayss and Freytag, under a "build, operate and transfer" system.

The 421-metre tower will be the third highest in the world after the CNN Tower in Toronto and the Moscow Tower. It will be the highest concrete structure in the world.

Dr Mahathir hoped the tower, whose design "is more beautiful" than those in Toronto and Moscow, would be a landmark "that can make all Malaysians happy".

He said the tower head has a beautiful design known as *muqarnaz*, which

is used in Islamic architecture.

Earlier, Information Minister, Datuk Mohamad Rahmat, who is the project's coordinating chairman, said the tower would be completed in December 1995.

He said it would have a revolving restaurant, observation platform and telecommunications and broadcasting facilities.

Among those present at the ceremony were Land and Co-operative Development Minister Tan Sri Sakaran Dandai, Information Ministry's Parliamentary Secretary Daluk Fauzi Abdul Rahman, Datuk Bandar Datuk Dr Mazlan Ahmad and Telekom Malaysia executive chairman Tan Sri Rashdan Baha.