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Mahathir-Measat

MEASAT TO MAKE MALAYSIA REGIONAL COMMUNICATIONS CENTRE

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KUALA LUMPUR, May 17 (Bernama) -- The launching of the Malaysian East Asian Satellite (Measat) by the end of next year will make Malaysia a regional communications centre, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Measat, as a regional satellite system, would not only meet part of the telecommunications and broadcasting needs of the country but also play an important role in Malaysia's contribution to the development of communications in Asia, he said.

"This was acknowledged at coordinating meetings with the countries concerned over the last 18 months," he said at the signing of a contract, for the manufacture of two Measat satellites, between Binariang Sdn Bhd, a Malaysian consortium, and Hughes Communications International Incorporated (United States), here.

Dr Mahathir said communication links throughout the country, including to the remote areas, would no longer be bound by restrictions with the availability of Measat.

In fact, he said, the communication links would stretch to areas outside the country which would be covered by Measat. -- more

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Mahathir-Measat 2 Kuala Lumpur

"This will bridge the gap in communications between our country and neighbouring countries, apart from stepping up communications with India and other countries in Asia," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the government would also encourage Measat to invest in satellites launched by Asian countries.

"The government wants communication links in the region to depend on and be connected with one another and be capable of upholding our regional traditional values," he said.

In this connection, he said, Malaysia welcomed the participation of other countries in the region in the launching of the second Measat satellite system in 1996.

Dr Mahathir also said that the launching of Measat would take Malaysia to the era of a proper broadcasting service. -- more

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This was because Measat would pioneer the use of the KU-band transponder which had hitherto been assumed as unsuitable for the Asian region because of poor reception by small antennae in homes during heavy rain.

"Other satellite systems in the region only operate on the C-band for analog telecommunications and broadcasting, which requires larger antennae and related cable systems," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Measat had been designed with the latest technology, including the use of digital modulation and encryption.

In this way, the people in the country would be able to use the Direct to User service through the KU-band whereby only authorised receivers would obtain the programmes.

He also said that the DTU system used by Measat not only provided for a high quality of broadcast and reception but its technology also allowed the government to license Measat under the Broadcasting Act unlike the C-band from overseas which was beyond control. . . more

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Mahathir-Measat 4 (last) Kuala Lumpur

Dr Mahathir said another of Measat's safeguards was for any other satellite wanting to cover Malaysia to coordinate with the Energy, Telecommunications and Post Ministry.

He also said that the DTU service could be used for education purposes, with the programmes being beamed to schools and universities throughout the country.

"The DTU service can also enable us to improve the standard of education in the rural areas," he said.

In the business sector, he said, DTU services could provide the latest news in the region, video conferencing facilities and despatch of financial data quickly.

At the function, Binariang was represented by two of its executive directors, Encik Noordin Baharuddin and Encik Khoo Teng Bin, while Hughes was represented by its chairman, Encik Ted McFarland, and its vice-president for Asia Pacific, Encik Steven Dorfman. -- Bernama

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