

PM: KL International Airport must be

No delay, no cost

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SEPANG, Mon. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today told contractors responsible for building the KL International Airport (KLIA) here that it must be completed on time and within its budget, adding that the Government would not entertain any unwarranted delays and additional costs.

The Prime Minister said the Government was concerned with the delays in the implementation of critical development projects, and the KLIA must not be affected by such delays.

Dr Mahathir made it clear to the contractors that they should take all necessary measures to ensure that the project was completed on time and within the budgeted cost.

He said there had been substantial cost overruns in the implementation of other critical development projects because of delays.

Dr Mahathir was speaking at the ground-breaking ceremony of Package One of the KLIA project, which comprises the main terminal building, contact pier and baggage handling system, at the project site here.

He was later briefed on the progress of the project by KL International Airport Bhd managing director Datuk Jamilul Hussein.

Package One of the project is being built by a consortium comprising Pemas Precision Engineering and Construction Sdn Bhd, Taisei Corporation, Kajima Corporation, Shimizu Corporation and Hazama for a tender price of RM1.741 billion.

This package, partly funded by a Japanese loan, has a contract duration of 33 months and is expected to be completed on Sept 15, 1997.

Dr Mahathir said, apart from fulfilling the objective of building an efficient, competitive and aesthetically attractive airport which would serve as a hub of the region, it was also the Gov-

ernment's intention that the airport be built in the most cost-effective manner consistent with the achievement of the operating standards expected of a major international airport.

Later, responding to Press queries, he said that during the briefing given to him those involved in the project were convinced that the project would be completed on time and the airport would be ready for use on Jan 1, 1998, just in time for the Commonwealth Games.

Since it was one of Malaysia's largest infrastructure projects, he said its timely completion was of paramount importance.

In his speech, Dr Mahathir also hoped that the

pleted on schedule

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project would speed up the transfer of technology and management expertise from foreign consultants and contractors to their Malaysian counterparts.

"It is incumbent upon all parties concerned to ensure that no effort is spared to accelerate the process of transferring of technology and management expertise," he said.

"Local companies involved in the project must work closely with their foreign partners and not just lend their name. Only then can the officers and staff learn how things are done," he said.

He added that the technology transfer should not be limited to any narrow segment of technical management skills but should encompass all levels to make such efforts worthwhile.

He said it was the Government's hope that, upon the successful completion of the project in 1997, Malaysia would be successful in building up a reservoir of expertise of local professional and technical personnel and established contractors who would play a leading role in further strengthening the construction industry.

Among those present at the ground-breaking ceremony were Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, Works Minister Datuk Leo Moggie, Selangor Menteri Besar Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib, Negri Sembilan Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohamed Isa Abdul Samad and Malacca Chief Minister Datuk Mohamed Zin Ghani.

Dr Mahathir also stressed that every opportunity should be given to Bumipu-

tera contractors, sub-contractors and suppliers to actively take part in the construction of the new airport.

He said steps must be taken to develop the KLIA as an efficient regional hub which could compete effectively with other airports in the region.

He said if the KLIA was efficient and well-managed, it could become the gateway to the region with passengers from other continents

arriving at Sepang before embarking on flights to their destinations in the region.

(When fully operational, KLIA is expected to cater to 100 million passengers a year. This will be a remarkable increase as the current international airport at Subang catered to 22.9 million passengers in 1993.)

The Prime Minister said the economic cost of inefficient and ineffective management of the KLIA could

be detrimental to its future success as a regional hub.

It was crucial that the airport be operated with the concept of hub operations involving the provision of a wide range of facilities and systems which permit the rapid and efficient transfer of passengers and their baggage, he added.

"To maintain the edge over other airports in the region, it is essential to develop specific niche marketing strategies for the promo-

tion of the new KLIA as both a passenger and cargo hub," he said.

He added that it was important to develop the manpower requirements in the operations and management needed by airports such as the KLIA, to ensure that Malaysia would have sufficient trained personnel at all levels to efficiently

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manage the new airport.

He said the management and operations of such mega-airports would require a large pool of experienced managers and staff of all categories who should have the knowledge, skills and right attitude for the job.

"Without proper manpower planning, there is always the fear that despite designing and building the best airport, it could still be fraught with operational problems," he added.

During the Press conference, when asked about improving transport links between the KLIA and Kuala Lumpur, Dr Mahathir said there were plans to build a rail project and the Government was studying how best to implement it.

He said the rail project might not be ready by Jan 1, 1998, but there would be good roads to cater for passengers travelling to the airport.

He added that temporary accommodation would be built to cater for those working on the project.