

Dr M: Putrajaya will benefit nation

**By Alex Choong and
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KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. — The development of the new Federal Government administrative centre at Putrajaya will benefit the nation, including providing 15,000 extra supporting job opportunities in the surrounding areas.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the infrastructural and social facilities, including transport and basic amenities, to be provided at a cost of about RM15 billion would directly benefit Selangor.

He said the development of Putrajaya would benefit the people of Selangor as the 10,000 hectares around the administrative centre would also be developed as contained in the proposed structure plan.

The project will also uniquely complement the Kuala Lumpur International Airport project.

"Putrajaya, which is based on the theme of a garden city that will be harmonious with the environment, modern, futuristic and unique, will be a model of town development at international level.

"It promises a comfortable and quality lifestyle to ensure that its residents enjoy the best in a modern and sophisticated residential area," Dr Mahathir said when tabling the Putrajaya Corporation Bill 1995 for second reading at the Dewan Rakyat.

The Bill is aimed at setting up a statutory body, which will be known as Perbadanan Putrajaya (Putrajaya Corporation), to administer and manage Putrajaya on behalf of the Federal Government.

The formation of Putrajaya Corporation is made under Article 80(5) and 92(1) of the Federal Constitution.

Dr Mahathir said Putrajaya would be a multi-media super corridor linking the new international airport in the South and Kuala Lumpur in the North.

He added that it would have the latest and most sophisticated telecommunications facilities.

The development concept of Putrajaya will be based on a three-way link principle — the relationship between man and his Creator, man and man and man and his environment.

The development is ex

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All round support for development of 21st century intelligent city

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pected to cost RM20.09 billion, a major portion of which would be financed through privatisation.

Dr Mahathir said the development cost would include RM700 million for land acquisition; RM15.29 billion for infrastructure, government offices and public facilities, and RM4.1 billion for housing and commercial purposes.

"The Government will ensure that the development of Putrajaya will not burden the Government financially and several approaches would be used to enable the Government to minimise its financial commitment," he said.

The area involves about 4,400ha in Sepang, Selangor. A total of 76,000 Federal Government servants will be working in an office area of 1.5 million square metres.

The development of Putrajaya, which was named in honour of Bapa Malaysia Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra, will comprise two parts — the core area and the neighbouring area.

The core area will be divided into five precincts — the Government, commercial, mixed, civic and cultural, and sports and recreation areas.

The neighbouring area will hold the housing, social facilities and business areas.

Dr Mahathir said 52,000 houses would be built, comprising 17,500 units for government staff, 17,500 for sale to civil servants and the rest for sale to the public.

Work on the development of Putrajaya is expected to begin by year's end and is expected to be completed in 10 years. It will be carried out in two phases. The first phase (1995-2000) comprises the building of office space for the Prime Minister's Department and Finance Ministry and agencies which do not now have their own buildings.

The second phase (2000-2005) will place agencies which currently have their own buildings.

Dr Mahathir said Kuala Lumpur as a Federal Territory had limited area and, therefore, it was difficult for it to expand to provide space and comfort for active commercial activities.

Putrajaya would bring benefits to the people.

"I believe that Putrajaya will be a city of the 21st century," he added.

Ruhanie Ahmad (BN-Parit Sulong), in debating the Bill, described the Government's move as proactive and "forward-looking".

He said as Putrajaya would become a futuristic township of the 21st century, he would envisage a scenario of Dr Mahathir contacting his deputy through "interactive video conferencing".

"I can also imagine Dr Mahathir receiving endless E-mails from friends, admirers and even from his critics," he said, adding that Cabinet Ministers would, through their computers get information from the Internet.

Ruhanie said he could also imagine a situation where government officials could, through the high-tech information system, purchase from the "electronic supermarket", adding that it could be from a pair of Bally shoes to tanks and jet fighters.

In line with this, he said, the Government should come out with a National Information Infrastructure Policy.

"This is vital as we enter the next millennium where the latest information technology will guide the people into electronic and paperless administration," he added.

Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar (BN-Batang Lupar) cautioned the Government when undertaking the mammoth project.

"The Government must plan at least 50 to 100 years ahead," he said, adding that a city near Oxford in England which boasts of having been planned for the 21st century had still to live up to its expectations.

He also said that legislation should be made to ensure that buildings should not exceed a certain level as was done in certain parts of New York City.

Wan Junaidi said proper planning should also be given serious consideration.

Dr Maximus Johnity Ongkili (PBS-Bandau) in supporting the Bill said Putrajaya when completed would boost the country's image.

He said the spillover bene-

"The quality of life in Kuala Lumpur would be reduced if it is too congested with buildings and traffic," he added.

Dr Mahathir said it was not easy to shift commercial activities as this was the private sector.

The Government also believed that the concentration of big companies in Kuala Lumpur was important if it wanted to be recognised internationally as a commercial centre in Asia.

On the other hand, it was easier for the Government to decide on the location of its offices.

At present, many Federal Government offices were scattered in various locations here and many rented space from the private sector. Thus, some ministries had to share space with other tenants and this was not appropriate in view of the sensitive nature of the Government's work.

Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu, in supporting the Bill, said the establishment of Putrajaya reflected another innovative plan by Dr Mahathir.

He said shifting the Government's administration to

fits from the project would be appreciated by people living near the township.

Datuk Mohd Zihin Mohd Hassan (BN-Larut) lauded the intelligent city planned for Putrajaya. He, however, said that a master plan should be drawn up to ensure the smooth implementation of the futuristic township.

Mohd Zihin said the Government should tap local talent in the development of the mega project.

Dr Tan Seng Glaw (DAP-Kepong) raised the question of the status of the land.

He said Putrajaya was sited on land belonging to Selangor and he asked: "What will happen if there is hostility between the State and the Federal Governments in future?"

He also said compensation to KL Kepong Berhad for the land amounted to almost RM500 million and whether the remainder RM200 million would be enough to compensate other landowners in the area.

Deputy Minister Datuk Mohamed Nazri Tan Sri Abdul Aziz would complete winding-up on points raised at the debate tomorrow.