

PM: With KLIA it will one day be comparable

Putrajaya can become

to Tokyo-Yokohama

megacity

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SEPANG, Tues. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today launched Putrajaya, the Federal Government's new administrative centre, which he said would one day emerge as a megacity comparable to other megacities like Tokyo-Yokohama.

To be developed on a 4,000ha site, 25km from Kuala Lumpur, the new city will cost RM20 billion and is scheduled for completion by the year 2005.

"I feel very proud, particularly so because this city was wholly planned by Malaysians and it will be developed by the people of Malaysia themselves," Dr Mahathir said at the launching ceremony here.

"All this proves what can be achieved in the spirit of Malaysia Incorporated towards fulfilling Vision 2020.

"Truly, this is a historic milestone which marks the beginning of the development of Putrajaya."

Dr Mahathir said a network and wireless form of information technology infrastructure would serve as the nerve of Putrajaya when completed.

It will form part of a multi-media super corridor (MSC) covering a 15km by 40km area between Kuala Lumpur and the KL International Airport being built in Sepang.

"The multi-media super corridor can be equipped with an integrated telecommunications network to meet the value-added telecommunication needs and be connected to the national information superhighway which in turn would be linked to the global network."

Dr Mahathir said with the high-quality facilities planned for the super corridor and suitable incentives, Malaysia could attract the best international information technology, telecommunications and multi-media agencies to act as catalyst for research and de-

velopment (R&D) as well as marketing.

He said it would also become the management centre of international conglomerates which could have multi-media access to their R&D and production centres around the world instead of using physical methods to send executive and capital information.

"The development of the multi-media super corridor will involve international companies which will be encouraged to tie up with local firms to produce a local information technology and multi-media industry capable of playing a major role at the international level.

"With the super corridor as a catalyst and Putrajaya as its spearhead, an information technology network could also be developed in other growth centres like in the north, Penang-Kulim industrial areas and the southern industrial areas in Johor."

He said wireless and information technology would form the backbone of Putrajaya's development and such facilities would be incorporated into all government buildings, business and commercial centres as well as civic and public activities.

Dr Mahathir said the provision of modern infrastructure and telecommunication facilities and the setting up of a "data warehouse centre" would assist in ensuring efficiency.

He said this would result in more efficient management and operation of offices, supervision of the environment, management of the city and its infrastructure, supervision of traffic, security and emergency services and the cultural growth of Putrajaya.

Dr Mahathir said the planning of the landscape of Putrajaya would also take into account the importance of lakes as an important aspect of urban environment.

He said the man-made lakes would be able to play a

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Development around new city to be controlled

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role as a climate modifier and moderator, functioning as a natural air-conditioning system.

Dr Mahathir said today's launch represented the peak of the nation's achievement in creating a Malaysian identity that is cultured and imbued with integrity and knowledge in line with Vision 2020.

"The transfer of the national administrative machinery from Kuala Lumpur to Putrajaya is in line with the Government's policy to balance and disperse development away from Kuala Lumpur."

He said the Government

chose Perang Besar in Selangor as the site of its new administrative centre because of its strategic location in the development corridor between Kuala Lumpur and the KL International Airport.

At a Press conference later, Dr Mahathir said development around the new city would be controlled as it would have a master plan and as far as possible not too many high-rise buildings would be allowed.

He said the Government might use the expertise of the Kuala Lumpur City Centre management team to oversee the development.

Asked what would happen to the government

buildings in Kuala Lumpur when the Federal Government moved to the new city, Dr Mahathir said it would sell some of them to meet the cost of developing Putrajaya and retain those it would need to use.

He said apart from the Prime Minister's office and residence, those government departments which were now renting premises from the private sector and those that the Government felt should move would be shifted to the new city.

Dr Mahathir said the Parliament House would not be moved from its present site.

Asked whether the 800-odd families currently living in Putrajaya would be

offered land there, Dr Mahathir said most of them were estate workers and there was no provision for estates in the new city, adding that the Selangor Government would have an alternative place for them.

He said the Government would have all the necessary physical requirements to ensure Putrajaya became a multi-media centre and information superhighway and transformed it into a communication city.

He said Kuala Lumpur would be the country's commercial capital and Putrajaya its administrative capital.

Dr Mahathir said South Africa by comparison had

four capitals. Pretoria is its administrative capital, Cape Town is where its Parliament is based, Bloedfontein is its judicial capital and Johannesburg its commercial capital.

He said while the distance between Putrajaya and Kuala Lumpur was 25km, the distance between Pretoria and Cape Town was 1,400km.

Asked if there were plans to set up similar cities in other States, Dr Mahathir said there were none.

He added that the Negri Sembilan and Pahang Governments had offered land to site the new city but the Federal Government opted for Putrajaya.