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Tower-Opening

KUALA LUMPUR TOWER OFFICIALLY OPENS WITH SPECTACULAR SHOW

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 1 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad officially opened Kuala Lumpur Tower, the country's newest landmark, here today.

Describing the the 421-metre high tower as the "most beautiful tower to date", he snipped a "laser ribbon" during the colourful ceremony which was televised "live" throughout the nation by RTM.

This was followed by a mesmerising extravaganza of fireworks, music and song that included a performance by a 100-member choir accompanied by a 30-member orchestra before more than 500 VVIP guests present.

On the ground, thousands of city dwellers came out of their homes or stopped their vehicles to admire the illuminated canvas formed by the fireworks over the capital city.

The tower, which is the fourth tallest communications tower in the world and the tallest of its kind in Southeast Asia, has been a hit with visitors since it opened its doors to the public on July 23, this year.

In his speech, Dr Mahathir said comments by certain parties that the tower looked no different than a baby's rattle should not be given any regard as it only reflected envy on their part.

"The fact is that we are capable of building this tower and we have the architectural perception that produces a structure more beautiful than the telecommunications towers in developed nations," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that the tower was essential in efforts to provide sophisticated telecommunications services and it is also the direct result of the privatisation of the Telecoms Department.

"When the government held the monopoly of telecommunications services, we have to allocate over RM100 million a year just to assist in providing telecommunications services. We certainly do not have enough money to build this tower which costs almost RM300 million," he said.

The Prime Minister admitted that telecommunications towers constructed from angle iron could also meet demand for telecommunications services.

But, Dr Mahathir said, such towers were not beautiful and could not serve as a decoration to be regarded with pride by the residents of the capital city and the people in the country.

"That is why we want to clean and beautify our capital cities and towns with gardens and landscaping. Our buildings are not only to provide useful spaces but should also be pleasing to the eyes," he said.

Dr Mahathir also admired the works of Iranian craftsmen from Isfahan who assisted in providing the decorative touches to the tower.

A breathtaking view of Kuala Lumpur awaits visitors at the observation deck located on the first level of the tower head while others can dine in style at Malaysia's highest restaurant, the revolving Seri Angkasa, one level up.

The Kuala Lumpur Tower was designed by Kumpulan Senireka Sdn Bhd to reflect Malaysian Islamic heritage and infrastructure construction started in May 1992.

The structure of the tower, a joint venture between Telekom Malaysia and Germany's Wayss & Freytag AG, is divided into four basic sections: the foundation base, the touristic floor, the tower shaft and the six-storey tower head.

Apart from the observation deck and the revolving restaurant, the tower head also houses radio and television broadcasting as well as

telecommunications stations.

To ensure safety, the tower has been fitted with the latest fire-fighting equipment. It also has a fire-refuge area at the tower head.

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