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Mahathir-Microsoft

MAHATHIR SEEKS BILL GATES' HELP FOR MULTIMEDIA CORRIDOR

By: Salmy Hashim

WASHINGTON, June 20 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is spending part of his vacation in Victoria, Vancouver, made a day-trip to Microsoft's headquarters in Seattle, Washington, where he had a "working lunch" with its founder, Bill Gates, official sources said on Wednesday.

The Prime Minister, who was given a briefing and a tour of the Microsoft headquarters on Monday, was also there to encourage Gate to assist Malaysia's quest in creating its Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) that will stretch from Kuala Lumpur to the new Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Sepang.

Sources said Dr Mahathir wants Gates, known for his ingenuity in turning Microsoft into the world's largest software manufacturer, to serve on a panel that would be responsible for the creation of Malaysia's own Silicon Valley.

The Prime Minister's unscheduled visit is perhaps part of his strategy to attract the "best brains" from the East and West in making Malaysia's high-technology venture a success.

In May he had visited Tokyo, San Francisco and Washington DC where he met and encouraged businessmen to take part in Malaysia's MSC project. He also toured Stanford University Technology Park and Sun Microsystems, a software maker in California's Silicon Valley.

Dr Mahathir is keen to attract more technology-based industries such as makers of computer softwares and wafer fabrications to locate their plants in Malaysia, especially in the proposed MSC.

The MSC is an area, 15km by 40km, linking the Kuala Lumpur City Centre, the Putrajaya new federal government administrative centre and the KLIA.

These three projects are expected to offer a huge market for multimedia products and services.

The sources said Dr Mahathir's visit to Microsoft was arranged by Malaysian businessman T. Ananda Krishnan.

Ananda Krishnan controls telecommunications group Binariang which owns Malaysia's first satellite Measat I launched in January. Binariang is due to launch a second satellite, Measat II, in September. -- BERNAMA

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