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PM - KLIA

PM CONFIDENT KLIA PROJECT CAN BE READY ON SCHEDULE

SEPANG, Jan 13 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the government is able to cut down the cost of construction for the KL International Airport (KLIA) in Sepang by engaging a local management team to manage the project.

He is also confident that the KLIA project can be completed on schedule now that the problems encountered by the management had been resolved.

Among the problems were the shortage of cement, workers and support materials, he told reporters after visiting the site of the RM6 billion project in Sepang today.

Initially, the government planned to engage a foreign consortium (a British-Japanese joint-venture) for the job. It was later given to a local team.

Dr Mahathir said the project encountered some problems initially but they had been overcome.

"However, the problems had been resolved and I am confident that the KLIA project can be completed on schedule," he added.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir was briefed by KLIA Chairman Tan Sri Clifford Herbert on the progress of the project.

The project on a 10,000-hectare site is scheduled for completion in early 1998.

Dr Mahathir said he was proud of the local management team in its ability to manage and implement a giant project like the KLIA "and this reflects the ability of the local people."

"With their ability, we no longer need to look for foreigners to manage our major projects," he said.

He said more foreign workers had been brought in to overcome the shortage of labour for the KLIA project.

On Mara, he said the agency's financial matters should be audited to ensure proper spending.

"Mara used to have plenty of money... so there should not be a situation where Mara does not have enough funds to spend," he said, adding that the agency had spent money very fast until it exhausted its funds.

Dr Mahathir earlier opened the hospital at KLIA.--Bernama