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PM-PenangNET

PM CONFIDENT PULAU PINANG CAN MAKE BIG CONTRIBUTION TO NATION BUILDING

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 29 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is confident that Pulau Pinang, under the leadership of Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon, will continue to play an important role in Malaysia's development.

"Pulau Pinang can emerge as a major hub in the northern region and, with cooperation from neighbouring states like Kedah, Perlis and Perak, its development will be more dynamic in line with that of the other states in Malaysia," he said when launching PenangNET at the National Science Centre, here, today.

During the conversation with Dr Koh through video conferencing, the prime minister said the people of Pulau Pinang had a bright future and he hoped that they would work harder towards realising the Vision 2020 aspiration to make Malaysia a developed country by that year.

He congratulated Dr Koh for taking the initiative in creating PenangNET which enables Penangites to link up directly with the national capital and other places.

He said this was the result of modern technology in Malaysia which he believed would develop rapidly.

Dr Mahathir said in jest: "I hope that with PenangNET the Pulau Pinang chief minister need no longer come to Kuala Lumpur. This will save my time a bit and if I feel I don't want to see him, I can move away from the camera.

"You cannot see me and I am tired of entertainig the numerous requests from Pulau Pinang. Pulau Pinang is asking for things all the time. Even after it is given, it asks for more. There is no need to do so," he said, to laughter from those present at both venues.

He also expressed the hope that the famed Pulau Pinang nasi kandar, char koay-teow and nutmeg would not change when the state achieved rapid development.

Dr Koh said he would ensure that the prime minister's favourite food would retain its original form and "might be sold through the Internet".

"If that's the case, I will eat nasi kandar through the Internet, it tastes good but is not filling," Dr Mahathir replied.

PenangNET, the brainchild of Dr Koh, is a public-private sector initiative to fully interconnet Pulau Pinang with high speed telecommunications infrastructure and applications that would enable the state government, industries and individuals to tap the full power of the digital economy.

Dr Koh spoke to the prime minister through the high speed transmission of voice and video that allowed interaction between Dr Mahathir and the audience that packed the Dewan Sri Pinang in Pulau Pinang. -- BERNAMA

ZAB JK