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Mahathir-Companies

29 COMPANIES ALL SET FOR MSC, SAYS MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, April 24 (Bernama) -- Twenty-nine companies have been awarded the Multimedia Super Corridor Company status because of their full commitment to participate in Information Technology (IT) development there, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad announced today.

The companies, including 10 local IT companies, planned to buy land in the MSC to set up their regional Research and Development Centre, he told reporters after chairing the National Information Technology Council (NITC) meeting at his office here.

They were chosen out of the 900 companies keen in locating in the MSC.

They are Nippon Telephone and Telegraph (NTT), Sun Microsystems, Fujitsu, DHL, Mitsubishi, NCR, NEC, British Telecoms, Reuters, Nortel, Siemens, Sumitomo, Sharp and ACL.

The local companies are Telekom Malaysia, Mimos Berhad, Sapura, Aims World Wide, PNB, TV3, Alam Teknokrat, Renong Solutions, IOI Multimedia and CSA.

They other five are joint venture companies formed between Alta Vista and Alam Teknokrat, Sun Microsystems and Mimos, Telekom and Universiti Putra Malaysia.

Dr Mahathir said the companies will be launching their specific sites in the MSC during the ground-breaking ceremony of the new IT city, Cyberjaya on May 17.

Cyberjaya will be the first IT city located in the 15 by 50 kilometres IT hub encompassing the Kuala Lumpur City Centre (KLCC), the new Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) in Sepang and the new administrative centre, Putrajaya.

"We are going to have this ground-breaking ceremony and there will be 29 balloons where actual buildings will be built," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said one of the MSC flagship applications, the Multimedia University, owned by Telekom with the cooperation of NTT, will be a priority project for the MSC.

On whether concessions for Bumiputera requirements in the MSC will be spread nation-wide in the future, Dr Mahathir said the government will have to evaluate the results of the concession in the MSC before making any decisions affecting the whole country.

"We impose no quotas for Bumiputera (in the MSC)..if we want to apply to the whole country, we will have to see the results first in the Multimedia Super Corridor," he said.

Meanwhile, Multimedia Development Corporation (MDC) Chairman Tan Sri Othman Yeop Abdullah said strategic efforts by the MDC to promote the MSC had aroused investments and put Malaysia on top of the list of best places for investment in the IT sector.

"When we first did a survey (to know) where Malaysia was in terms of choice for people to invest, it was way down the list as far as IT is concerned, but after the promotion, Malaysia came out ahead of the rest even Singapore," he said.

The MDC's strategy was double-edged in that it invited leading-edged companies to set up base in the MSC and at the same time developed local ones to interact with them and generate the necessary spin-offs from the multimedia industry, he said.

A report on the progress of the seven MSC flagship applications would be submitted to the implementation council in July, he said.

NITC Permanent Secretary Tengku Datuk Dr Azzman Sharifaddeen said the National IT Agenda would gradually be refined to use IT in fulfilling the 2020 vision to create an industrialised nation and a civil, more informed and empowered, open and democratic society.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim also attended the two-hour long meeting.-- BERNAMA

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