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Mahathir-MSK

BENEFITS FROM MSC DEPENDS ON THE PEOPLE, SAYS MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, March 11 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said it will be up to the people to use their wisdom to benefit from the establishment of the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC).

The people cannot depend on foreigners to help them in the application of the MSC but should take advantage of the opportunities created by the MSC to master all aspects of the information technology.

"If the MSC is set up in this region, we can develop the region, we can learn new technology and we may even be involved in the technology and be more adept in its application than others," he said at a dialogue after briefing Barisan Nasional leaders including Members of Parliament and State Assemblies on the MSC at the Dewan Merdeka, Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) here today.

He was responding to the fear raised that Malaysia might not benefit from the MSC because the government gave too many concessions in the Bill of Guarantees to companies operating within the MSC.

Dr Mahathir said the government was aware that foreigners would come to Malaysia for their own self interest rather than merely helping the nation to succeed.

He pointed out that although foreign investors who ventured into the manufacturing sector here reaped much profit, the government did not tax them before.

However, the country benefited from the foreign investments through the employment opportunities created so much so that 100 per cent of Malaysians had job opportunities.

"It is a reality that foreign investments had made the nation much richer now and the people are enjoying more income than before, if such investments had not been forthcoming, I'm sure our people will be unemployed," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the same approach was being applied in the development of the MSC which the government was now implementing on a trial basis.

"But to protect our interest, we have taken precaution which was not done before, we restrict the MSC to the designated area only so that if any undesirable development occurred, it would not spread throughout the country," he said.

The MSC is made up of a zone measuring 15 x 50 km beginning from Kuala Lumpur and stretching southwards. It covers the Kuala Lumpur City Centre (KLCC), the Federal Government's new administration centre namely Putrajaya and the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) at Sepang.

The Prime Minister said the MSC would become a trial zone as the government was dealing with something which it had yet to understand fully.

"This time we are dealing with something which we don't understand 100 per cent. We don't know what's coming, what we know is that if it is done elsewhere, we will still feel the negative effect.

"That's why on balance we cannot guarantee, on balance we get the benefits, but we restrict them to the designated zone...this is our precaution. We take precautionary measures and do not expose the whole of Malaysia for the experimental stage so that we can prevent any adverse development from spreading further," he said.

Dr Mahathir believed that the MSC would bring much benefits to Malaysia and the people generally.

The briefing started with a video presentation on the MSC.

During the briefing, Dr Mahathir stressed that it was important for BN leaders to understand the information age and to be able to apply such information so that they could fulfil their responsibilities effectively.

If they did not know how to apply the information, they would continue to be ruled but if they knew how to sieve and apply the information, they would succeed and even be able to compete with others internationally, he said.

He said the government set up the MSC to expand industries related to the information technology and Malaysia had to take such measures so that the people could adapt themselves to the information era.

"Now we are moving into the era of the borderless world. Malaysia must have a strategy to receive and deflect information. Thus we must have the capability and should not feel inferior," he added.

Dr Mahathir also hoped that Malaysians working with foreign firms and who had gained expertise would return to Malaysia to contribute in making the establishment of the MSC a success. -- BERNAMA

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