

07/04/1997

Dr M visits Kuwait's US\$390m govt complex

Kamarul Yunus in Kuwait City

KUWAIT CITY: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who arrived in Kuwait City yesterday, spent more than 30 minutes touring the US\$390 million (US\$1 = RM2.48) Al-Seif Palace, the yet-to-be-completed new government office complex in Kuwait.

Accompanied by his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, the Prime Minister snapped several shots of the beautiful complex, which will also house the offices of the Emir of Kuwait, its Crown Prince and Kuwaiti Prime Minister.

Quoting the Kuwait Crown Prince and Prime Minister's protocol here, a statement issued by the Kuwaiti Embassy said the visit to the Al-Seif Palace was included in Dr Mahathir's itinerary based on the discussion between the Kuwaiti Ambassador in Kuala Lumpur with the Prime Minister.

"This could be of interest to the Prime Minister in the context of Malaysia's own plan to build a government office complex in Putrajaya," the statement said.

The statement said although the Al-Seif Palace has yet to be officially opened, Dr Mahathir is considered as the palace's first visitor.

Construction work on the government office complex, which is part of the beautification programme of Kuwait's beach front, commenced about three years ago and is expected to be completed by the end of this year.

Dr Mahathir, who led a 50-member Malaysian delegation, arrived here yesterday as part of his five-day official visit to Kuwait and Bahrain.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir and his entourage visited the 370m-high Liberation Tower, the fifth tallest telecommunications tower in the world after the Toronto Tower, Moscow Tower, Shanghai Tower and the Kuala Lumpur Tower.

The Liberation Tower consists of a 308m post-tensioned concrete shaft topped by a 62m steel mast. The foundation of the tower is 18m below ground-level and accommodates three basement floors.

The concrete shaft has a diameter of 22m at ground level and 4m at the 308m level, while the steel mast is fabricated of steel sheets varying in thickness from 33mm at its base to 12mm at the top. The diameter of the mast at its base is 3m and at the top, 1.5m.

The two projecting structures on the shaft, the lower at 150m level and the upper one between levels 175m to 210m high, are of structural steel strengthened by post-tensioned concrete ring beams.

There are seven levels of antenna platforms above the 175m mark and also provision for antenna brackets at different levels on the steel mast, the vertical recesses on the tower shaft below the level of 150m accommodate two panoramic lifts for the public to go up to the revolving restaurant floor and two other lifts for staff to reach the technical offices.

The tower project took shape as part of the effort by the Kuwait Government to keep pace with the international technological revolution in the telecommunications field.

At the time the project was conceived, the site was already the heart of the telephone network in Kuwait. The existing 11-storey building now integrated in the new centre had been constructed in the period between 1968 and 1970 and contained local and international exchanges but could not cope with the rapid technological developments.

The new centre was designed in such a way that the existing facilities were never interrupted during construction and at the same time allowed

smooth extension into the new facilities.

Entrepreneur Development Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed, Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud and Terengganu Menteri Besar Tan Sri Wan Mokhtar Ahmad were among members of the Malaysian delegation who visited the tower.

Several prominent Malaysian businessmen were also in the delegation, including Malaysia Airlines chairman, Tan Sri Tajudin Ramli, Sapura Holdings' chairman, Tan Sri Shamsuddin Abdul Kadir, Land and General Bhd chairman, Tan Sri Wan Azmi Wan Hamzah, Securities Commission chairman Datuk Dr Mohd Munir Abdul Majid, Mara Holdings' Datuk Mohamed Nadzmi Mohamed Salleh and Bank Islam chief executive officer, Datuk Ahmad Tajudin Abdul Rahman.

Dr Mahathir's state visit to Kuwait was on the invitation of the Emir and Kuwait Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

(END)