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Anwar-Cyberjaya

MAHATHIR TO PERFORM GROUND-BREAKING FOR CYBERJAYA IN MAY

SEPANG, March 17 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will perform the ground-breaking for the Information Technology City " Cyberjaya," where the Multimedia University would be located, in middle of May.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said the necessary infrastructures such as the highway, telecommunications, power and water supply had been taken into account for Cyberjaya, the implementation of which is on schedule.

To speed up the project's implementation, a certificate of urgency would be issued to the developer to carry out ground-levelling works on the 750-hectare site to enable Dr Mahathir to lay the foundation stone in May as planned, he told reporters after chairing Cyberjaya Implementation Task Force meeting here today.

He said he felt proud with the overwhelming response from foreign multimedia companies as some of them were only waiting for the approval of the project site to start construction work including the Nippon Telegraph and Telecommunications (NTT) Corporation, a Japanese telecommunications giant.

"I am very proud with the interests shown by big companies in Malaysia itself like Telekom Malaysia which will set up a multimedia faculty in Cyberjaya including a Research and Development (R&D) centre," he said.

Anwar said TV3 would expedite construction of its new sophisticated complex in Cyberjaya and Permodalan Nasional Berhad (PNB) might also locate its new headquarters there.

Plantation giant Golden Hope would also set up its R and D facility and headquarters in Cyberjaya.

"Besides that, we have decided the construction of Multimedia Development Corporation's (MDC) headquarters in Cyberjaya be hastened as well as the Multimedia University being planned by several international firms including NTT," he said.

Anwar said it was decided in today's meeting that facilities and officers in the Sepang district council be upgraded to enable the special officers to coordinate and assist in the implementation of the Cyberjaya project in line with the structural plan approved by Dr Mahathir and Cyberjaya Implementation Task Force.

"I have stressed that all parties involved in this ambitious project must carry out their respective tasks on schedule.

"While we are proud with the progress achieved so far, we will monitor the developments every two weeks. I have also asked Selangor Menteri Besar (Tan Sri Muhammad Haji Muhamad Taib) to help out at state-level and Chief Secretary to the Government (Datuk Paduka Abdul Halim Ali) to coordinate at federal-level," he said.

Anwar, who is Finance Minister, said the fortnightly progress reports would be submitted to him.

He said land acquisition for Cyberjaya, covering a sprawling 2,800ha did not pose problems as the Selangor government had taken appropriate measures.

A major portion of the land were owned by the government and Golden Hope, a plantation company, apart from Selangor Foundation, Selangor Agricultural Development Authority, Risda, Youth Land Schemes and private property.

Only a small parcel of land were owned by individuals who would be compensated accordingly based on the valuation, he said.

Asked on the cost of Cyberjaya, which is part of the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC), Anwar said the cost had been considered but did not wish to reveal it as it often lead to confusion.

"Like the on-going KL International Airport project here which some people estimated its cost to RM20 billion but when we calculated the actual cost after implementing, it did not even touch RM10 billion...this is why I'm not keen to reveal the cost," he said.

Furthermore, almost the entire cost for Cyberjaya would be borne by the private sector and also Cyberview Holdings, the company which would help handle implementation of the project on behalf of MDC.

Anwar said the area would be developed in stages by the private sector in accordance with the approved structural plan, some of which were expected to be completed in 1998, 1999 and the year 2000.

"Several basic infrastructure facilities and initial development projects are slated for completion in 1998," he said.

He said the MSC was the most exciting news now with more than 400 enquiries received on the project which had wooed interests at national, regional and international levels.

He said interested parties had asked the government to alienate the sites for them.

"They do not require a big area as they are using sophisticated technology," he said

Meanwhile, MDC executive chairman Tan Sri Dr Othman Yeop Abdullah told reporters that there was no major problems in carrying out the Cyberjaya project as there were numerous requests for sites from interested companies.

"We are expediting implementation of the project," he said.

He said some companies would be sited in Cyberjaya while the rest would be located in other Cyber cities around Universiti Pertanian Malaysia in Serdang and Technology Park, which had been accorded MSC status.

So far, four companies had been granted approval to set up their facilities in Cyberjaya, which also enjoy MSC status, while the remaining applications would be scrutinised in a month, he said.

"There is nothing at the Cyberjaya project site now as approval had not been given to investors to enter the area. Only in today's meeting, it was agreed to allow them to enter and start work, he said.

He said Cyberview Holding would develop the 2,800ha area, about five kilometres north of Dengkil.

The meeting was attended by Selangor Menteri Besar Tan Sri Muhammad Haji Muhamad Taib, Chief Secretary to the Government Datuk Paduka Abdul Halim Ali, Selangor State Secretary Datuk Haji Hashim Meon, Finance Ministry Parliamentary Secretary Datuk Dr Shafie Mohd Salleh, senior officers of government departments and agencies involved in the ambitious project, a brainchild of Dr Mahathir. -- BERNAMA

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