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Mahathir-development

MALAYSIA HAS TO DEVELOP FASTER, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

MIRI, Aug 18 (Bernama) -- Prime minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamed said Malaysia has to be developed faster to give the people every opportunity to enjoy a higher standard of living and to catch up with developed nations.

"We have to move fast and run faster. If we were to run slower, we will never catch up and the gap would be even greater and forever, we will be left behind," he said when officiating at the ground breaking for the Miri City Fan and Cultural Centre here today.

Brushing aside foreign criticism that the country was developing too fast and that the economy was overheating, Dr Mahathir, who is on a two-day visit to Sarawak, said Malaysia was left behind during the colonial period.

"It is not over-heating, it is well-planned development," he said.

He said developments projects were being carried out throughout the nation with tower cranes easily seen everywhere including in Sabah and Sarawak.

"The tower crane is the sign of hectic developments and some people suggested to me that its should be the symbol of the nation," he said, drawing laughter from the 3,000 crowd attending the ceremony.

The RM56-million project on a 10-hectare site, dubbed as a park within the city, would comprise a botanical garden, an open theatre which can accommodate 8,000, and a resource centre.

Also present were Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud and Deputy Chief Ministers Tan Sri Alfred Jabu and Datuk Dr George Chan and federal Agriculture Minister Datuk Amar Dr Sulaiman Daud.

Dr Mahathir said the government was not interested in building monuments but in development that could improve the living standards of the people.

It was essential that the government ensured them a decent life like providing shelter, food and clothing.

"We are prepared to work hard to enrich the country for the better life of the people," he said.

"The West have good cities developed over hundreds of years but when we are doing that, they said we are developing too fast, too ambitious, living beyond our capacity and no money to provide fund for this.

"Why do these people criticise us when we only want to give our people a good life?" he said.

On Sarawak, Dr Mahathir said it was a very fortunate state that had capable leaders who have managed the state well.

Sarawak had underwent tremendous development over the last 15 years. More people now owned cars and all major towns are connected by roads, he added.

Meanwhile, later in KUCHING, about 1,000 people greeted Dr Mahathir and his wife Datin Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali upon arrival at the international airport there from Miri to continue his official visit to Sarawak

Abdul Taib and his wife Puan Sri Hajah Laila accompanied them to the state capital onboard a government executive jet.

Former Yang Dipertua Negeri Tun Mohamad Salahudin headed the line of dignataries who recieved the prime minister.

Immediately upon arrival Dr Mahathir visited a residential area in the Demak Laut industrial zone and a deep-sea port under construction nearby.

-- BERNAMA

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