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MSC will bring changes to Malaysia, the world

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THE Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) will bring changes to Malaysians as well as the world. What the impact would be exactly, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad says he would not know.

The MSC, Malaysia's widely-publicised test-bed for future development of information technology and multimedia, is the brainchild of Prime Minister.

"There will be some changes to the Malaysian society and also to the rest of the world," he said in reply to a reporter's question on the impact of the project to the Malaysian society.

Dr Mahathir spoke at a press conference after visiting Universiti Pertanian Malaysia in Serdang, Selangor yesterday. At the end of the eight-hour visit, the Prime Minister had launched a technology incubation centre, an earth satellite, witnessed the signing of two memorandums of understanding, addressed students and change the name of the agricultural university to Universiti Putra Malaysia.

The new name was picked because of the location of the university near Putrajaya, the government's new administrative centre, he said.

Dr Mahathir said Putra also reflects the country's youthful population.

Dr Mahathir said the name change is necessary as the university's role is no longer confined to agriculture knowledge.

The Prime Minister said Malaysia hopes to gain from the MSC project although it will bring changes to the Malaysian society. He said he could not absolutely say for sure what the impact of the MSC would be on the country.

"But what is important is that, whether or not there is MSC, we cannot avoid the impact and effect of multimedia and information age where everyone talks about the borderless world.

"This is something which nobody can avoid. But if we understand what information age means and what it brings, than I believe we would be able to manage any undesirable effect from the information age," he said.

Dr Mahathir said he was impressed with the UPM-MTDC Technology Incubation Centre One, which is a joint effort between UPM and the Malaysian Technology Development Corp.

The centre is designed to encourage the formation and growth of technology-based businesses by forming formal and operational links with a university or research centre.

Dr Mahathir said companies such as Microsoft started small, "in a garage with just ideas as their initial capital".

Asked to comment on the proposed introduction of the electronic passport, he said machine-readable passport stores data in chips to prevent forgery and speed up application for the travel document.

The UPMNet, also launched by Dr Mahathir, will enable the university to become the nucleus of the MSC by facilitating higher learning, support research, providing instant information, enables learning on demand and transform UPM to an electronic campus.

The Prime Minister also witnessed the signing of two memorandums of understanding between two telecommunication companies with the UPM.

The first was between UPM and TRI Group for the setting up of the Malaysian Graduates School of Management.

The second MOU was between Time Telekom and UPM for a 20-year lease of 6ha where the Time Telekom earth station is sited.

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