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Never cut corners, Dr M tells builders

Lokman Mansor

MALAYSIAN contractors, in racing to complete their projects, must maintain good management practices, and not cut corners and compromise on quality, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad says.

The time taken by local constructors to complete their projects has been greatly reduced over the years, the Prime Minister noted.

"The Bank Bumiputera building took eight years to build while the Dayabumi Complex took only three years. Now they (contractors) are getting even faster," Dr Mahathir told a press conference after touring the site of the RM2 billion Mines Resort City in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

In the 12 months since construction began, the resort, comprising seven separate projects, is already in its final stages of completion.

The resort, with over 5 million sq ft of built-up area, is located in Sungai Besi on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur.

The Prime Minister said quality can be maintained even as construction time continues to be reduced.

"Quality is not determined by whether the project is fast or slow, but whether there is emphasis on quality," he said, adding that there must be good management on the part of developers and contractors so that they do not have to resort to short cuts which may pose a danger at a later stage.

"This is something contractors in Malaysia must learn. However, sometimes, like in the construction of schools, it takes a long time to complete," he said.

The Government views such delays seriously, he said, because if a public facility is not ready on schedule, many problems are created.

"Sometimes in the agreement with the contractor, the Government has its hands tied... so much so that even if the project is not completed, to terminate the contract takes a long time and can get complicated.

"The contractors will make all sorts of demands, when actually they cannot deliver what they promised. If we try to stop them they even take us to court," he added.

Dr Mahathir said Bumiputera contractors, in particular, should learn to manage well because the faster a project is completed, the sooner they will get the returns.

On the Mines Resort City, the Prime Minister said the rate of construction can be considered a record.

The seven components of the project undertaken by the Country Heights group of companies are the Mines Wonderland, the Mines Palace of the Golden Horses, the Mines Beach Resort, the Mines Waterfront Business Park, the Mines Resort and Golf Club, the Mines Malaysia International Exhibition and Showroom, and the Mines Shopping Fair.

Dr Mahathir said the resort city contains many unique features which should appeal to tourists while offering opportunities for the setting up of shops, businesses and entertainment outlets.

The Mines Palace of the Golden Horses hotel is of particular interest to the Government as several important gatherings, including the G-15 and Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) meetings, may be held there, he said.

During the site tour, Dr Mahathir also officiated the opening of Sapura Group's new RM161 million head office located at the resort.

He also launched the "Golf for Charity" event that aims to raise close to RM5 million for various organisations by the year 1999.

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