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PM's presentation an eagerly-awaited event

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's scheduled presentation in the UK on the Multimedia Super-Corridor (MSC) project has generated tremendous response that many may have to be "turned away at the doors".

UK-based telecommunications consultancy Analysys managing director Dr David Cleevely told Business Times that since Dr Mahathir upgraded his trip to the UK from a vacation to an official visit to promote the MSC, there has been a great deal of enthusiasm in the UK about it.

He said the number of people wanting to attend the seminar exceeds 1,000 now and the hall can hold only 700, so some people will have to be turned away at the doors.

"It is going to be much bigger than the MSC presentation held at the US West Coast," he said.

Dr Mahathir will lead a 100-member delegation to London and he will be speaking at an investors conference at the Imperial College. He will also hold private meetings with top executives from leading European multimedia companies.

Cleevely said the idea of a seminar was suggested because Dr Mahathir had given a seminar in the US and the British Government was very keen that if he came to UK he should do the same thing.

"Once the idea of a seminar caught on, there was a great deal of enthusiasm within the UK and the Malaysian side responded very strongly by extending and broadening the scope of the visit," he said.

Cleevely added that the idea of a presentation seminar was then put forward by the British Government and the Malaysian Government agreed. "Since Dr Mahathir has agreed, the amount of enthusiasm has grown and grown so it has gone from a relatively small event to being something that is now very significant."

He said most of the major information technology and communications companies in the UK will be attending the seminar.

Cleevely, who heads what is claimed to be Europe's largest independent consultancy specialising in telecommunications, is keen to promote links between the MSC and Cambridge which contains within a very small area, what is probably the largest concentration of telecommunications companies in Europe.

He said that originally some 30 members of the Malaysian delegation were supposed to visit the Cambridge companies but now the number has swelled to between 60 and 80 members.

"First of all you make sure that they (the MSC and Cambridge companies) meet so they can get to know each other and establish if there are ways of cooperation.

"They have to see whether the technology developed in Cambridge can be used by MSC companies and look at ideas for new applications and services.

"Secondly they have to see whether the MSC companies and approach taken by the MSC can be used and adopted by the companies in the UK. It is very much of a two-way process," Cleevely said.

He added that there are possibilities of commercial exploitations in the partnership between the MSC and the Cambridge companies.

"The companies in Cambridge have very successful track records in exporting their products and they may be able to offer partnerships to Malaysian companies to assist them with their exports," he said.

Cleevely said there is also the possibility of collaboration with the

University of Cambridge, where there are large numbers of Malaysian students, and close ties with a number of Malaysian academic institutions.

"It may be possible to build on some of the uses of Granta network which is the university's own optical fibre network to provide some kind of shared resources and teaching facilities," he said.

The MSC, which covers Kuala Lumpur City Centre, Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Sepang and the new government administrative centre in Putrajaya and neighbouring Cyberjaya, encompasses an area of about 15km by 50km.

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