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Mahathir-centre

S'WAK TO HAVE FEDERAL ADMIN CENTRE LIKE PUTRAJAYA

KUCHING, Aug 19 (Bernama) -- Sarawak is to have an administrative centre modelled after the new federal administrative capital being built in Putrajaya outside Kuala Lumpur, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The federal government planned to develop the centre on a 808-hectare site alienated by the state government in Kampung Kubah at km 30 of the Kuching- Matang road.

The proposed centre, to house federal ministries and departments, would be incorporated into the rapidly growing state capital, he said

"I hope it will be like Putrajaya serving as the federal administrative centre in Sarawak," he said when opening an arch commemorating the 40th year of Malaysia's independence at Matang, 30 km from here.

Earlier, at the outset of the ceremony Dr Mahathir was pleasantly surprised as Sarawak chief minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud handed him the title deed for the site meant for the proposed centre.

The size of the site is equivalent to 2020 acres, a reference to vision 2020, the national aspiration to attain developed-nation status by year 2020.

Dr Mahathir said he would ask the federal government to thoroughly plan the area's development so that the proposed centre would generate greater progress for Sarawak.

The prime minister hoped development of the area would not only benefit the federal and state governments but also the people residing in adjacent settlements.

Dr Mahathir said it was not often that the federal government received land as a gift from a state government and he attributed this to the close ties between Kuala Lumpur and Sarawak.

In this context, the prime minister said close rapport between states and the federal government was a pre-requisite for a state or the country's development.

"We're fortunate that the federal and the state governments are run by the same party. As such, problems can be resolved through negotiations," he said.

Because of such good rapport, he said, Malaysia's development was fastest among other developing countries.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia could be even stronger if the various ethnic groups in the country could discard their parochialism.

"We'll emerge stronger once we do way with our parochial ways and regard ourselves singly as Malaysians," he said.

The prime minister also said Malaysians needed to boost self-confidence and put in hard work to help the country attain a developed-nation status.

"We'll be able to realise vision 2020 faster, meaning better living standards for the people, if we work harder," he said.

He said the country had already come up with various innovations in several fields which have been exported or adopted by other countries.

The prime minister said he was very impressed with a local engineering innovation on mud-consolidation technique now used in the construction of the new deep-water port outside Kuching which he visited yesterday.

Today is the last day of Dr Mahathir's two-day official visit to Sarawak.

Dr Mahathir said he would further scrutinise the mud-consolidation

technique for possible application in Kedah which was planning to develop muddy areas.

Moreover the technique, perfected by a Sarawakian, could also be exported, the prime minister said.

Those innovations spoke of the never-ending successes brought about by the the country's independence, he added. -- BERNAMA

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