

18/03/1997

Super drive status for Cyberjaya development

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SEPANG, Mon. - Priority has been given for the acquisition of 750 hectares here to allow development of Cyberjaya, which forms part of the Multimedia Super Corridor, to get off the ground, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said today.

He said the consortium given the task of developing the city, Cyberview Holdings, had applied for a "certificate of urgency" order so that work on the site could begin immediately.

The consortium comprises the Multimedia Development Corporation, Telekom Malaysia, the Selangor Government, Permodalan Nasional Bhd and Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corp.

Anwar said the ground-breaking ceremony of the city, to be officiated by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, would be held in mid-May as planned.

Expressing satisfaction that all plans for Cyberjaya, the intelligent city designated for companies forming part of the MSC, were progressing as scheduled, Anwar said:

"The need for infrastructure facilities like the dedicated highway, express rail link, telecommunications, electricity and water supply has been taken into account and their implementation is according to plan."

Anwar was speaking to reporters after chairing a co-ordination meeting on the development of Cyberjaya at the Sepang District and Land Office.

Among those present were Selangor Menteri Besar Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib, Chief Secretary to the Government Datuk Paduka Abdul Halim Ali, MDC executive chairman Tan Sri Dr Othman Yeop Abdullah and Town and Country Planning director-general Datuk Zainuddin Muhammad.

On when the city would be ready, he said completion of its various components would be staggered between 1998 and 2000.

However, the basic infrastructure facilities and basic development would be ready by next year.

"I will be monitoring the progress every two weeks. I have also asked the Selangor Government and the Chief Secretary to the Government to assist in the development at their level."

The meeting had agreed to a few changes to the plans such as the alignment of the highway and a few other infrastructure facilities, he said.

On the response from foreign companies towards Cyberjaya, the Deputy Prime Minister said it had been encouraging, adding that some of them were only waiting for approval to start work at their designated sites.

The participation and response from local companies, he said, were equally encouraging.

Among them are Telekom Malaysia, TV3, Permodalan Nasional Berhad and Golden Hope. Telekom is slated to site its university's multimedia faculty there while the rest will either have their headquarters or research and development centres at Cyberjaya.

On whether Cyberview Holdings had encountered problems in acquiring the land, comprising State land and private-owned, Anwar said: "There is none. On the price paid, it will be according to the valuation done by the Valuation Department."

On the overall cost of developing Cyberjaya, Anwar, who is also Finance Minister, said he was not that keen to put a price tag to it.

"This is because it can sometimes lead to confusion... like KLIA (Kuala

Lumpur International Airport), it is said to be RM20 billion although the actual cost is not more than RM10 billion."

Another reason, he said, was because much of the cost would be borne by Cyberview Holdings and the private companies developing their headquarters and factories in the city.

Later, Othman said the development of Cyberjaya would now go "full steam ahead", adding no major problem had been encountered.

He said the decision to accelerate the development was made due to the great deal of interest shown by companies wanting to come into Cyberjaya, where the first phase was initially scheduled for completion only in 1999.

"It is also aimed at instilling confidence among investors. They are a bit impatient because they see nothing is happening... actually lots of things are happening."

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