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Mahathir - MSC

ADDITIONAL RM600 MILLION FOR CYBERJAYA

KUALA LUMPUR, July 8 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the government has approved an additional RM600 million for the development of Cyberjaya, the world's first intelligent city.

He said the allocation reaffirmed the government's commitment to see the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) project through despite the current downturn in the economy.

Cyberjaya, a multi-million ringgit project, is part of the MSC, a 750 sq km zone south of here designated as a hub for the development of multimedia products and services.

The additional allocation is expected to be drawn from the RM5-billion Infrastructure Fund announced by Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim last week.

Anwar had said that the fund would ensure that provision of all basic infrastructure for the MSC would be on schedule.

"The government is fully committed to the development of the MSC and all the money we can afford will go into the project and it will take off," Dr Mahathir said after closing a conference on the MSC entitled "Positioning the Cyberpreneurs into the next millennium" here today.

Dr Mahathir described the MSC as a very important project for the country and a logical step to take after attaining industrialisation.

"We are going ahead with the project," Dr Mahathir said.

The prime minister called on local small and medium scale IT companies to take advantage of the low cost in setting up base within the MSC.

However, he said foreign participants are also welcomed.

"We have always laid out the welcome mat for them and we have been a good host," he said.

While saying that a great deal of keenness has been expressed in the MSC, Dr Mahathir noted that the capability to use technology to create new products among Malaysian companies had become evident.

"I hope they will be able to export the products to earn foreign exchange," he said.

Dr Mahathir said technologies and their applications were moving so fast so much so that Malaysians needed to equip themselves to face such development.

He said those who did not master and understand the usage of new technologies would be left behind and because of this understanding the government decided to go into multimedia in a big way.

During a question-and-answer session later with conference participants, Dr Mahathir said the people must learn to be patient in handling new technologies in order to reap the intended benefits.

"Contain your anger, don't be confused and be patient," he said.

In reference to the hiccups experienced at the new KL International Airport (KLIA) which uses state-of-the-art technology, Dr Mahathir said: "KLIA is a typical example of bringing a new technology into an area where people are used to old things."

Dr Mahathir said that Malaysia, in its pursuit to acquire modern technology, was bound to make mistakes along the way.

But he was quick to point out that it was through mistakes that one would learn.

"We are going to stumble along, make mistakes...but we will come up with a workable solution," he said.

Dr Mahathir also hoped that people in the rural areas would be able to grasp and benefit from the development of the MSC.

He said just like children, rural people were eager to learn and quick to pick up new things.

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