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High praise from PM for construction industry

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - The local construction industry, which has developed tremendously, has lent credence to the fact that Malaysians are good builders and able to complete projects ahead of schedule.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said foreigners should take notice of this trend and accept that Malaysian builders had the capacity to undertake and complete projects fast.

"In Malaysia, we have very good builders and we can build in a very short time.

"I hope foreigners will notice this once they stop looking at (our) courts and things like that. They may notice that we build things very fast here and we build very beautiful buildings," he said.

Dr Mahathir said this at the opening of the RM250 million Palace of the Golden Horses hotel.

Also present were his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Seri Sabbaruddin Chik, Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu and founder and managing director of Country Heights Group of Companies Tan Sri Lee Kim Yew.

Dr Mahathir said the ability of the developers to build the five-star hotel in a record 22 months was testimony to the fact that Malaysians could carry out big projects in a short period. The hotel has 401 rooms and 80 suites.

Dr Mahathir also praised the management of the Palace of Golden Horses for having won several awards although it was opened only a year ago.

Among the awards are the Gold Key Award for the best hotel in the Asia Pacific region.

Several major events have also been held at the hotel such as the G15 Summit, the Second Asean Informal Summit and the Fourth Asia Pacific Dialogue. It will also host this year's Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation forum.

"I am proud of Malaysia's capacity to build. I am proud of the hotels that are being built in Malaysia," Dr Mahathir said.

He said although Malaysia was facing economic problems, which had led to a decline in tourist arrivals, he was confident that the situation would soon improve.

Those present were also shown a video on the stages of construction of the hotel.

Dr Mahathir, later in jest, said: "In the video, I seem to be visiting the place almost everyday. But that is the trick always played by the television.

"It can make things happen many more times than the number of times it actually happened."

Dr Mahathir said he visited the hotel because he had "a fascination for construction sites."

He said while some people spent their time playing golf or hitting tennis balls - which he described as a futile pastime - he found entertainment by watching construction sites "grow faster and better."

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