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Mahathir-Projects

ALL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS MUST MEET LONG-TERM NEEDS, SAYS MAHATHIR

KOTA BAHARU, July 22 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today all development projects must be planned to meet the long-term needs.

This was to avoid having to repeat the work to meet the current needs, he said.

"That's the problem with us. When we develop something, we only think for that particular moment, so we build something that may not meet the needs of the future," he said when performing the ground-breaking and laying of the foundation stone for the new terminal of the Sultan Ismail Petra Airport, here.

The prime minister said a development project must be capable of meeting the needs for hundreds of years.

He said everytime a development was conducted its cost would rise as prices went up all the time.

Dr Mahathir said building by repetition, for example the infrastructure of an airport in a certain area, would give rise to many problems like limited land and involvement of populated areas.

He cited the example of the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport in Subang which was built with 400,000 passengers a year in mind and could not cope when the number hit 13 million in 1997 but which could not be expanded because its reserve land was very small.

He said the government's focus was on developing projects that could be expanded to meet the current needs.

This could be seen in the construction of the KL International Airport (KLIA) on 10,000ha in Sepang which could cater to 25 million passengers a year.

He said that when the nation's economy was doing well, the KLIA could be further expanded to accommodate 125 million passengers a year in 2100.

"This is how we think in the country now, not like in the past. We think long-term because we don't want to give problems to the state governments in future as it is not easy to find a place to build an airport.

"People sometimes say that the government is wasteful but actually we are not. It's for future needs.

"For example, Putrajaya, the government administrative centre, is not an extravagant project because it can meet the needs 100, 200, 300 years from now," he said.

Similarly, the prime minister's official residence in Putrajaya was built with the prime minister's future needs in mind, he said.

Dr Mahathir also said that there would be no discrimination in the recruitment of staff for the new terminal of the Sultan Ismail Petra Airport in Pengkalan Chepa.

"At this terminal there will be male and female workers, whether good-looking or not," he said.

As such, he hoped that the people of Kelantan would continue to support the federal government to carry on developing the state.

Construction of the new RM50 million terminal on a 10ha site will start in September and will take 20 months to complete.

-- BERNAMA

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