

08 JUL 1999

MAHATHIR-CYBERJAYA

CYBERJAYA WILL CONTRIBUTE TO ECONOMIC RECOVERY

CYBERJAYA, July 8 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the timely completion of Cyberjaya will contribute significantly to Malaysia's ongoing economic recovery.

"The timely completion of the first phase of Cyberjaya's development, despite our recent economic difficulties, is proof of our commitment to all investors in the MSC (Multimedia Super Corridor)," he said at the launching of Cyberjaya, one of the world's intelligent cities and the nerve centre of the MSC.

He said that even during the recent downturn the MSC was given priority in terms of both budget allocation and policy support.

He reiterated the government's full commitment towards ensuring the continued progress of the development of Cyberjaya on a fast track basis.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia must continue to innovate and be even more responsive to investors to attract knowledge from around the world to help create a vibrant, creative, networked society in Cyberjaya.

Cyberjaya is located next to Putrajaya, the new federal administrative centre, about 40km south of Kuala Lumpur.

Among those present at the opening ceremony were Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Cabinet ministers and members of the MSC International Advisory Panel (IAP) who adjourned for a series of meetings right after the event.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia must continue to innovate and be even more responsive to investors to attract knowledge from around the world to help create a vibrant, creative, networked society in Cyberjaya.

"Given its potential and importance, Malaysia has designated MSC as its next engine of growth," he said.

Malaysians, by and large, knew that the MSC represented their future and thus provided support for the venture.

The prime minister said Malaysia did not view initiatives similar to the MSC in other parts of the world as competitors but more as opportunities for networking and collaboration.

The MSC is a 750 sq km area south of Kuala Lumpur designated as a hub for the development of multimedia services and products.

"We have started to build bridges with these initiatives and together hope to overcome the myriad of cross-border issues coming in the wake of the Information Age," he added.

Dr Mahathir said there were already 32 world-class web-shapers which had obtained MSC status.

He said from 285 companies which had applied for the status, 225 had obtained it and 21 companies, including eight MSC-status firms, were already located in Cyberjaya.

"All MSC-status companies are expected to move into one of the four designated cybercities within a year of Cyberjaya's opening...I would also like to call on other MSC-status companies to relocate to Cyberjaya early to reap the full benefits," he said.

He said the official launching of Cyberjaya also signified that the last major building block of the MSC was in place and the completion of several key complementary "soft" infrastructure such as the various cyberlaws enacted.

"We have also put into place the necessary support in terms of training and human resource programmes for the development of technopreneurs and

knowledge workers," he said.

Malaysia's commitment towards developing the MSC and multimedia industry for the long term was vindicated by the latest statistics from around the world, he said.

Dr Mahathir said in the United States, although the high technology services sector accounted for only 5.5 per cent of American gross domestic product in 1997, it produced almost 40 per cent of GDP growth over the preceding two years.

Cyberjaya is one of the MSC's two flagships intelligent cities - the other one being Putrajaya, the neighbouring new federal administrative capital.

"Cyberjaya is a greenfield development uniquely designed to be a global test-bed. We are not held back by rigid or entrenched practices and policies," said Dr Mahathir.

Cyberjaya will be a unique blend of the best from East and West evolving to take on its own creative culture," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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