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Cyberjaya `is well ahead of schedule' (HL)

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CYBERJAYA, Thurs. - Cyberjaya, Malaysia's intelligent city which was today launched by Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, is well ahead of schedule by way of global participation.

The city is the nucleus of the Multimedia Super Corridor and the model for other similar information technology and multimedia development zones.

The Prime Minister said he was targeting 50 companies by 2003 but it has now attracted 32 world-class web shapers who had obtained MSC status, many of them as regional initiatives.

And as he spoke, several world class companies had already established their facilities in the MSC along with several universities which had set up their campuses.

Dr Mahathir does not see the proliferation of such cities around the world as a threat but an opportunity for networking.

Present at the opening were some of the biggest names in the IT industry including Sun Microsystems' chief scientist John Gage, Siemens AG's Information and Broadband Sales president Dr Wolfgang Essig, Reuters Asia's managing director Jeremy Penn, Oracle's Asia Pacific vice-president Derek Williams, Nokia Corporation's senior vice-president Kari Ahola, Nippon Telephone and Telegraph Communications' president Masanobu Suzuki, Silicon Graphics chairman Robert Bishop, Madge Networks Ltd chairman and CEO Robert Madge, Hewlett Packard's chairman, president and CEO Datuk Lewis Platt, British Telecom's chief executive Sir Peter Bonfield and Acer Incorporated's chairman and CEO Datuk Dr Stan Shih.

They are among 13 members of the International Advisory Panel and 13 other representatives and observers who are all here to attend the third IAP meeting.

They placed their hands on a semi-circular table, activating a column that rose up behind them, bearing the letters "MSC." Dr Mahathir, who is IAP chairman, then signed a commemorative plaque.

Dr Mahathir said Cyberjaya clearly proved the ability of Malaysians to develop the physical infrastructure and infostructure of the MSC at a very rapid pace.

He said it was just over two years ago that construction started.

"We must now work even harder to build further on the progress achieved on all the other components of the MSC Bill of Guarantee to create the ideal environment for investors in the corridor and especially here."

The RM2.2 billion Cyberjaya is expected to be fully developed over a period of 20 years.

To date, 285 companies have applied for MSC status and 225 have obtained it while 21 companies including eight with MSC-status are already located in Cyberjaya.

By any measure, Dr Mahathir said the MSC had come a long way in pursuing its mission, particularly in attracting investors' response.

"We must continue to innovate and be even more responsive to investors to attract knowledge from around the world to help create the vibrant, creative, networked society here in Cyberjaya."

Reiterating the Government's commitment in ensuring continued progress of the development of the city on a fast-track-basis, he said Malaysians by and large knew that the MSC represented their future, thus support and participation in the venture had permeated the whole society.

Given its potential and importance, Dr Mahathir said the MSC had been designated as the country's next engine of growth, adding that even during the recent downturn, the project was given priority in terms of both budget allocation and policy support.

The Prime Minister said today's ceremony symbolised the success of various ongoing processes.

Firstly, he said it signified yet another successful collaboration between the public and private sector.

"Secondly, the timely completion of this first phase of Cyberjaya's development despite our recent economic difficulties, is proof of our commitment to all investors in the MSC.

"Its timely completion will also contribute significantly to our ongoing economic recovery."

Dr Mahathir said the official launch of Cyberjaya also marked the completion of several key complementary "soft" infrastructure, including the various cyberlaws enacted by the Government and measures to catalyse e-commerce development.

This includes the necessary support in terms of training and human resource programmes for the development of technopreneurs and knowledge workers.

Dr Mahathir called on MSC-status companies to relocate to Cyberjaya.

The Prime Minister promised that they would find the city an excellent value proposition.

He said Cyberjaya was equipped with world-class telecommunications networks to be supplemented by high quality public amenities.

The city's other plus points are: it is envisaged to create a unique eco-friendly environment and community to foster creative talent; its unique and strategic location including excellent access and close proximity to the Kuala Lumpur International Airport; and MSC-status companies can reap the power of association due to the presence of the Multimedia University, Tenaga University and Universiti Putra Malaysia.

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