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Dr M starts up Malaysia's next growth engine (HL)

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THE expeditious completion of Cyberjaya despite recent economic difficulties is proof of Malaysia's commitment to all investors in the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC), Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad says. The Prime Minister said Cyberjaya is the nerve centre of the MSC, Malaysia's next engine of growth. Even during the downturn, the MSC was given priority in terms of both budget allocation and policy support. "I would like to reiterate the Government's full commitment towards ensuring the continued development of Cyberjaya on a fast-track basis," he added.

Speaking at the official opening of Cyberjaya and the 3rd MSC International Advisory Panel (IAP) meeting at Cyber View Lodge yesterday, Dr Mahathir said Cyberjaya will also contribute significantly to the nation's ongoing economic recovery.

He said throughout Malaysia's transformation from an agriculture-based economy to one focused on manufacturing, a key factor was the emphasis on becoming globally competitive by creating a conducive business environment.

"This will continue through the third phase of our development as we capitalise on the opportunities of the Information Age. Thus the MSC initiative will carry the Malaysian success story of growth and stability well into the next millennium," Dr Mahathir said.

Despite its share of detractors and cynics, the success of the MSC to date speaks for itself. There are 32 world-class web-shapers who have obtained MSC status, clearly ahead of schedule compared to the target of 50 by 2003.

Some 285 companies have applied for MSC status and 225 have obtained it, with 21 companies, including eight with MSC status, already located in Cyberjaya. Among them is NTT MSC Centre, NTT's second largest outside Japan.

Dr Mahathir said by any measure, the MSC has come a long way in pursuing its mission, in particular from the viewpoint of attracting investors.

"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," he said.

Dr Mahathir said several key complementary "soft" infrastructure, including various cyberlaws and measures to catalyse e-commerce development, has been completed. Training and human resource programmes for the development of technopreneurs and knowledge workers have also been introduced.

"The official launch of Cyberjaya signifies that the final major building block of the MSC is in place. It is one of the MSC's two flagship intelligent cities, the other being Putrajaya, the Government Administrative Centre, which is also ready for occupation," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the twin cities supported by the Technology Park, the Twin Towers and Multimedia University form the nucleus of the emergent Malaysian digital community.

Cyberjaya, complete with advanced infrastructure, is now ready for occupation and all MSC-status companies are now expected to move into one of the four designated cybercities within a year of Cyberjaya's opening, he said.

The other two cybercities are Kuala Lumpur City Centre and Kuala Lumpur

International Airport in Sepang.

"I would like to call on MSC-status companies to relocate to Cyberjaya early to reap the full benefits of association and networking with all the other elements of the MSC," Dr Mahathir said.

With the presence of Multimedia University, Tenaga University and Universiti Putra Malaysia, MSC will seek to emulate the Stanford University-inspired Silicon Valley and create a networked, creative and productive society in Cyberjaya.

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