

10 JUL 1999

DR MAHATHIR RIDICULES PAS FOR WANTING TO AUCTION PUTRAJAYA

CYBERJAYA, July 10 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today ridiculed PAS for wanting to auction Putrajaya if the party wins the next general election.

"I'm happy it wants to auction. This is the first time PAS is auctioning a mosque," he said when asked about the statement by PAS president Datuk Fadzil Noor several days ago.

"I hope Fadzil Noor will ring the bell in front of the mosque and say this a mosque suitable for turning into a shopping complex and for auction...who wants to buy, buy," he told a news conference after attending the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) International Advisory Panel meeting, here.

Putrajaya, the new federal administrative capital, is one of the components of the MSC. The Putra Mosque in Putrajaya is located near the Prime Minister's Office complex.

Fadzil was reported to have said that Putrajaya would be auctioned off to rich royalty the world over while other mega projects would be leased out.

Yesterday, Dr Mahathir said the construction of Putrajaya and other big projects by the government was for long-term benefits and not an extravagance.

On PAS' proposal to raise a motion in the dewan rakyat to impose the death sentence on Muslims for apostasy, he said the issue of apostasy was raised by PAS solely as a political gimmick.

"There's no sincerity at all," he said.

-- BERNAMA

TM JK