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Mahathir-Government

E-GOVERNMENT A NEW WAY TO SERVE PEOPLE, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, May 12 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said electronic government (E-Govt) will increase the efficiency of the civil service and enable it meet the people's expectations in a new way in the Information Technology (IT) era.

"This is the new way of doing things for the government and hopefully our civil servants will learn how to operate the complex machines that are being introduced," he said.

Dr Mahathir said this in his remarks at the signing of a RM35-million contract here between the government and a Sapura-led consortium for the development and implementation of a pilot phase of the Prime Minister's Office-Generic Office Environment under the electronic government flagship application.

He said today's event marked a watershed in the business of government, thanks to the development of new technologies particularly IT, and would make a success of the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC).

The MSC is a 750sq km area, from the Kuala Lumpur City Centre to the KL International Airport in Sepang, earmarked for the research and development of IT software and products.

Dr Mahathir expressed hope that with the implementation of the project, the government would be able to solve problems, including how to spend its development allocations efficiently.

"At the moment, we are faced with the problem of having a lot of money and not spending it because the procedures are so tedious that by the end of the year the allocations will not be spent or at least a small part of the allocations will be spent.

"Now I hope the transfer of funds from the Ministry of Finance to the other ministries and then onward to pay contractors, subcontractors and so on will be much faster because all you have to do is press a few buttons and the figures will transfer themselves from one point to another," he said.

Dr Mahathir also expressed hope that members of the consortium would involve themselves more in research and development (R&D).

On another note, the prime minister expressed relief that the project would finally take off after "so many discussions and worries about procedures and the many seemingly insurmountable obstacles".

Dr Mahathir said he was glad that progress had been made on the implementation of e-government and that it came at the time when the government was about to shift to the new federal administrative capital in Putrajaya.

"It is a very sophisticated project where everything is meant to be electronic and we don't have to move around too much.

"This may, of course, result in the atrophy of our legs and also our fingers will grow longer since we have to be pressing all those buttons from morning until night," he said in jest to the laughter of those present.

Apart from e-government, the other six MSC flagship applications are smart schools, telemedicine, borderless marketing centre, worldwide manufacturing web, the world's first multipurpose card and the R&D cluster.

The consortium comprises Sapura Advance Systems Sdn Bhd, Microsoft Knowledge Capital Centre Sdn Bhd, Hewlett Packard Sales (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd and EDS MSC Sdn Bhd.

Dr Mahathir witnessed the signing of the agreement by Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Abdul Halim Ali, representing the government and the consortium, led by Sapura Group president and chief executive officer Datuk Shahril Tan Sri Shamsuddin.

-- BERNAMA

MAM RYN