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Mahathir-Congress

HOSTING OF ROAD CONGRESS ANOTHER FIRST FOR M'SIA

KUALA LUMPUR, June 3 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he envisaged roads and transportation continuing to play a crucial role in spearheading Malaysia's march towards becoming a developed nation by year 2020.

He said the past decade alone saw the national road network expanding rapidly as evident by the completion of the North-South Expressway and other privatised highways worth billions of ringgit.

The prime minister said this in a message in conjunction with the 21st World Road Congress which Malaysia is hosting at the Putra World Trade Centre here starting Oct 3.

About 3,500 delegates from around the world are expected to participate in the week-long congress jointly organised by the Malaysian government and the World Road Association.

Malaysia is the first Southeast Asian country and second in Asia, to host the congress held every four years.

Canada hosted the last congress in Montreal in 1995. With good transportation, road and telecommunication facilities to offer, Malaysia indeed serves as an ideal venue for the congress and other related events, the prime minister said.

"It is my hope that the congress will provide the experts the opportunity to share and exchange knowledge in the various aspects of road-building technology besides helping them to understand the problems faced by developed and developing nations," said Dr Mahathir.

Delegates would get a closer look at how Malaysia's road and transportation network played a pivotal role in her economic and social advancement, he said.

Dr Mahathir said the hosting of the congress, coordinated by the Works Ministry, combined the effort of public agencies and private sector organisations involved in road-building and related activities.

"Their teamwork shall ensure that you will not only benefit from the congress but also savour the charms of Malaysia and the hospitality of her people," he said.

Dr Mahathir gave the assurance that Malaysia, as congress host and as was the case in past international events that she had organised, would spare no effort to make the congress better than the last.

"The success of playing host to 70 nations in the '98 Commonwealth Games is a source of great pride to Malaysia," he said.

The '98 Commonwealth Games proved Malaysians' organisational ability to host major international events, he said.

"I'm confident that Malaysians will show the same dedication towards making the congress a big success," he added.

Congress' programme highlights include;

* two sessions involving ministers responsible for roads and transport and mayors from 101 countries; and

* a road and transport engineering-related exhibition.

-- BERNAMA

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