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Mahathir-Putrajaya

PUTRAJAYA WILL BE NEW FEDERAL CAPITAL

JITRA, July 20 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Putrajaya, the new town and government administrative centre, will become the federal capital one day.

The prime minister said the government developed the new town for the long-term benefit to make it a capital opened and built by Malaysians themselves.

"The construction of Putrajaya is for the next 100 years. The people should be proud of a capital that we built ourselves," he said at a meeting with the people in Kampung Jeragan, near here.

Dr Mahathir, accompanied by Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, is on the last day of his two-day visit to Kedah. It is the first in the second round of a series of visits to the states this year to go down to the field and explain current issues to the people.

Putrajaya, which houses the new federal administrative centre including the Prime Minister's Department, has been branded by the opposition as an extravagant and unnecessary mega project. PAS president Datuk Fadzil Noor promised the people to auction it off if the opposition front wins the next general election.

Dr Mahathir said Kuala Lumpur, the current federal capital, was opened by Yap Ah Loy for tin mining and the British later turned it into the federal capital.

"After 42 years of independence we want a capital that we build ourselves, so we built Putrajaya. Putrajaya is specially built when we are independent. That is our intention," he said.

Mr Mahathir, who is also MP for Kubang Pasu, earlier clarified to his constituents the opposition's allegation that the prime minister's official residence in Putrajaya, Selangor, was his personal "palace".

"I'm nearly 74 years old, how long can I live? If the PAS leader becomes prime minister, live there. Don't be arrogant and say you don't want to live there," he said.

He said a PAS leader had previously said he did not want to occupy the menteri besar's official residence or use the official Mercedes Benz car when he became menteri besar but in the end he used the car.

The excuse given by the PAS leader for using the car was that he pitied the government officers who would not be able to use bigger cars if the menteri besar used a small one, Dr Mahathir said.

He conceded that the prime minister's official residence was big because it was part of a complex that had facilities like halls for the public.

He also explained that the additions for the house to have six rooms were approved by former deputy prime minister and former finance minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim who had six children and who at that time was expected to succeed him and live there.

He said that if PAS wanted to auction off Putrajaya to rich foreign kings, then it would also auction off the Putrajaya Mosque there.

"I have studied Islamic history, no one has auctioned off a mosque. What talk is this? It is mindless talk," Dr Mahathir said.

He also explained at length his reasons for sacking Anwar as his deputy.

He said, among other things, that the action against Anwar was not done out of hatred but out of responsibility to the people including future

generations.
-- BERNAMA
ZKS JK