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Quiet start to nation's tryst with destiny

CYBERJAYA, Thurs. - It was a low-key ceremony for an historic occasion. But the crowd of corporate chiefs, government officials and reporters witnessing the launch of Cyberjaya today did not need any dazzling special effects to recognise the magnitude of the event.

Cyberjaya will be one of the nerve centres of the Multimedia Super Corridor, and home to the corporate tenants who have been granted MSC-status.

With a high-tech infrastructure that includes a fibre-optics communications network, Cyberjaya was designed to be an incubator for cutting edge IT products and services for the global market.

Besides its public amenities, Cyberjaya will also be the site of multimedia universities, Smart homes and schools and research and development centres, taking the concept of urbania in Malaysia to a new level.

For such a project, it was perhaps fitting to keep the launching ceremony free of fuss, allowing the city's impressive credentials - it was completed one year ahead of schedule - to speak for itself.

The crowd on hand to see the ceremony gathered at the picturesque grounds of Cyberview Lodge's Apec Garden by 8am, and the air was the abuzz with talk about the launch of one of the world's first intelligent cities.

Cabinet Ministers and senior civil servants mingled with the heads of the some of the top IT-related companies against clear skies that promised no rain would dampen the launch.

Ustaz Pirdaus Ismail Al-Hafiz, the imam at National Mosque, started the ceremony with a brief doa selamat.

The dignitaries - 13 International Advisory Panel members, 13 representatives and observers, and key Cabinet members who are part of the MSC implementation committee - then assembled for what has come to be a traditional group photo at every meeting of the International Advisory Panel.

After his speech, the Prime Minister then gathered at a semi-circular table with the other VIPs. They placed their hands on the table, and a column rose behind them bearing the letters "MSC."

A panel on the column then silently slid open, revealing a plaque with the words "A Global Bridge to the Next Millennium". Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad signed the plaque, putting his name to the project that he had nursed since inception.

With that, Cyberjaya officially came into being. As the guests exited the garden for a gruelling day of discussions, soap bubbles were released and floated around the shrubbery, adding a whimsical touch to a national milestone.

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