

# Convention centre with difference launched

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NECC will contribute to economic growth, says PM

By FERIDA ABDUL KUDHUS

PETALING JAYA, Wed: The National Exhibition and Convention Centre (NECC), to be located in Terminal One of Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah (SAAS) International Airport, is targeted to become the benchmark for all convention centres.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that work to promote the centre should begin now although its construction is expected to be completed in the third quarter of 2002.

He said that the project, although going to be branded as another mega-project, will contribute towards the country's economic growth as it will bring in foreign funds.

"We have to think of a business which will use the runway which can bring in things that the country needs and can be exhibited," he said during the launch-

ing of the NECC.

"So it is only natural that the old airport be turned into a huge exhibition and convention centre."

Mahathir said a big inflow of tourists is also expected with the completion of the centre.

The Terminal One of SAAS airport will be demolished to make way for the construction of the NECC, which is being developed by the Malaysia Airports Berhad.

MAB chairman Tan Sri Basir Ismail said the centre, which has 100,000 sq metres of exhibition space, is estimated to cost about RM1 billion.

The NECC is the only convention centre in the world with a direct access to a Boeing 747-runway of its own, which offers exhibitors and event organisers the option of flying in both cargo and passengers directly to the centre for their events.