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Softbank founder keen on the MSC

MASAYOSHI Son, founder and president of Softbank Corp, has given an undertaking that he will "do something" in the Multimedia Super Corridor.

This undertaking was given when he met Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday. However, no details were immediately available.

Son, labelled as "Japan's hottest entrepreneur" by Forbes magazine, owns a variety of Internet companies and has considerable stakes in Yahoo, E\*TRADE and E-LOAN. He was also a member of the late Keizo Obuchi's Competitiveness Council.

Dr Mahathir encouraged all Japanese companies involved in IT to participate in the MSC and to use it as a "test bed". On Friday, he invited Japanese multinational, Matsushita, to "participate in a big way" in the MSC.

Speaking to the Press after visiting the Toyota Higashi Fuji Research and Development Centre, 180km to the west of Tokyo, Dr Mahathir said there was no other facility similar to the MSC anywhere.

Asked about the competition posed to MSC from other "hybrids", he said "the hybrids are hybrids".

The 50km by 15km corridor is almost a different country, with different laws, different practices and policies and with all the facilities and infrastructure needed for IT. Others may have one street or one building but none so far has been able to set up a corridor of the size of the MSC and all the advantages that it offers.

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