

Putrajaya's growth will benefit country and people

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Dr M: Those who understand cycle of economy will appreciate its development

PUTRAJAYA, Thurs: The official declaration of Putrajaya as a Federal Territory today has created a growth centre which will develop rapidly for the benefit of the country's economy and that of the area.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said with its establishment, the government could enhance its service to the people in a more efficient, quick and effective way.

"With this development, too, a more rapid development will be enjoyed directly by Selangor and by the whole country in general," he said in his speech when making the declaration at the Dataran Perdana here.

He said the federal government will develop Putrajaya and its surroundings by building infrastructure, commercial centre and social facilities there.

Once it is fully completed, it would be connected by rail with all parts of the peninsula through the KL Sentral terminal due to its strategic location, he said.

This is because in Malaysia, it is a normal practice to develop a new town and at the same time renew the development of an old town.

"All parties will benefit. Since business activities are indeed intense in the towns compared with in the rural areas and estates, many people will get the opportunity to work and do business," he said.

Mahathir said those who understand the cycle of economy will appreciate the development of a town such as Putrajaya.

He said it is strange for some people to think that developing Putrajaya is a wasteful effort but at the same time they could accept the plans for other places like Petaling Jaya, Subang Jaya

and Shah Alam.

"The reason is the politics of looking for issues to degrade the government. The country's interest is ignored for the political interest of certain parties," he said.

"Simply for this purpose, they are willing to conspire with foreigners and allege that Putrajaya is a mega and wasteful project."

He said that Putrajaya was not built for the present leaders as it is meant for all future leaders who will be in charge of a highly developed country.

Mahathir thanked the Sultan of Selangor and the state for their willingness to hand over the 4,581ha to the Federal Territory.

The agreement for this was signed between the state and federal governments last Nov 7.

Four years ago, Putrajaya was an oil palm-cum-rubber plantation in an economically less-significant area known as Perang Besar, which only had 60 homes for estate workers.

Over a short time, after Putrajaya came up, there are

already 26 blocks of administrative buildings with 42 blocks more due for completion by 2003.

By 2010, 67,000 residential units would have been completed.

Currently, Putrajaya has a population of 7,250 from 1,450 households and 1,500 units of dwellings.

The declaration ceremony today was attended by all cabinet ministers, Selangor Datuk Mentri Besar Dr Mohd Khir Toyo and Selangor state assemblymen.

Others included new Chief

Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Samsudin Osman and Putrajaya Holdings president Tan Sri Azizan Zainal Abidin.

The function also included the hoisting of the new Federal Territory flag, which kicked off a two-day celebration at the Putrajaya Lake and Dataran Putra.

The prime minister attended the celebrations, which included a helicopter fly-pass, water parade, kite show, kayak and traditional boat show, and a rowing competition.