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Mosque (A Special Report)

AL-BUKHARY MOSQUE, A MODEL OF FINE ARCHITECTURE

By: Mohd Zahari Morad

ALOR SETAR, Feb 22 (Bernama) -- Four days before the last Aidil Fitri, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad attended a breaking of fast at the Al-Bukhary Complex's mosque, Jalan Langgar here.

Among those present at the function was PAS president Datuk Fadzil Noor.

The next day, the unofficial meeting between the two Malay party leaders, made the front pages of the local dailies.

Fostering unity among Muslims is one of the main objectives of the Al-Bukhary Foundation which constructed the mosque, said a senior foundation official, who did not wish to be named.

The mosque was built due to the noble aspirations of the foundation, steered by executive chairman Tan Sri Syed Mokhtar Al Bukhary who has also constructed several mosques in the state like the ones in Pantai Johor, Akar Peluru and Sik.

Those who passed through Jalan Langgar would be fascinated by the fine architecture of the mosque, made more enchanting at night with the presence of glittering lights at complex's compound.

The Al-Bukhary Mosque, said to be built at the cost of millions of ringgit, is among the most beautiful mosques in Kedah and stands to become Alor Setar's landmark soon.

In order to enter the double-storey mosque, one has to pass through an open square where a 30-metre stream runs into a small pond.

The water symbolises purity, said the official.

"There are seven blue-coloured domes in all with the main one built over the main prayer hall. The 99 names of Allah were carved on the interior of the main dome.

"The seven domes symbolise that the Islamic teachings has reached the world's seven continents," he said.

He said the main prayer hall, equipped with air-conditioning, can accommodate 2,000 people at any particular time.

Right in front of the main prayer hall is the "mikrab", made by Iranian craftsmen. This is the place for the Imam to deliver the sermon for the Friday and Hari Raya prayers.

Located on the ground floor is the second prayer hall used when the main prayer hall upstairs is full. A screen was laid out in the ground floor prayer hall which shows the Imam reading the sermons.

For the old and the handicapped, there are two lifts available which will ferry them up to the main prayer hall from the ground floor.

The official said the ground floor also has a multipurpose room apart from a library, Imam's office and banquet room.

He said the mosque can actually accommodate up to 15,000 people if all of its prayer halls and square are utilised at any particular time like for the Friday prayers.

According to the official the mosque, built in 1999, was expected to be fully ready end of this month, in time for the Aidil Adha prayers in March.

It would be opened for tours and visits by the public where a briefing room is provided.

Apart from the mosque, the Al-Bukhary complex also houses, among others, a religious school, orphanage, old folks home, rest house, treatment centre and business premises.

-- BERNAMA

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