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PM marks completion of Putrajaya Lake

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PUTRAJAYA, Tues. - Just 40 minutes away from the hustle and bustle of Kuala Lumpur in the heart of the new administrative capital is the breathtakingly beautiful Putrajaya Lake.

The artificial lake, set to become a premier tourist location, is designed as a natural cooling system for the area.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad officially marked its completion today at a simple ceremony, which saw him taking a 45-minute boat ride around the lake.

The Prime Minister worked the controls of a crane to lift a sheet piling out of the water to symbolise the fact that the lake was ready.

Sheet pilings were placed at a section of the lake to form a temporary dam when it was being created.

The lake covers about 13 per cent of Putrajaya, part of it encircling an island that is earmarked for the development of a commercial district.

Fringing the lake are landmarks such as the Prime Minister's Department building and the Putrajaya mosque.

Though landscaping along certain sections of the shoreline had not been completed, Dr Mahathir was happy with the progress achieved.

"I am satisfied. Definitely. Give it a little longer and the place will look beautiful," he told reporters after the ceremony.

The lake runs under several bridges and past sites marked for the building of five-star hotels.

Dr Mahathir said visitors often thought the lake was natural and were impressed when he told them it was artificial.

On tourist activities at the lake, he said there should be separate areas for a beach and for boat races.

"I hope no speed boats will be allowed," he said.

Besides aesthetic value, the lake is also slated to become a premier location for water sports and recreation.

For the past three years, parts of the lake have hosted activities at national and international levels such as fishing competitions, boating festivals and canoeing championships.

The water quality is graded Class 2B of the Interim National Water Quality Standards and suitable for body contact.

"Man-made wetlands at the upper section of the lake help to remove pollutants and clean the water before it enters the lake," said a Perbadanan Putrajaya official.

The length of the lake's shoreline is 38km with a catchment area of 51 sq km.

"The depth varies between three and 12 metres. It has 10 bridges and two monorail crossings," he added.

The lake houses a public boat club called Kelab Tasik Putrajaya, situated next to the Marine Police Complex in Precinct 8 with activities like sailing, kayaking, rowing and canoeing.

For non-members, the charge is RM3 per person with rental fees for kayaking, Canadian canoeing (three-seater) or sailing at RM10, RM20 and RM10 per hour respectively.

Kelab Tasik Putrajaya manager Alan Zamirza Abdul Latiff said the public should take advantage of the facilities.

Most of the club's patrons are Putrajaya residents and government servants.

Among plans for the future are parasailing, water skiing, public swimming, sand/pebble beaches, quayside retailing, cruise boats, powered leisure boats and an emergency response centre.