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KLIA architect eyes Eco-Media City next

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SERDANG, Sat. - Architect extraordinaire Dr Kisho Kurokawa, who designed the Kuala Lumpur International Airport, is eager to begin work on the Eco-Media City project that is slated to be located in the Multimedia Super Corridor.

The Japanese architect, who received a Honorary Doctorate in Architecture from Universiti Putra Malaysia today, said he had been developing the idea for the project for 14 years and hoped it would materialise soon.

"We have had many meetings with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, the Cabinet and the Science, Technology and Environment Ministry.

"Nothing has been decided officially, but we hope the project will be near Cyberjaya," he said today.

Speaking at a Press conference after receiving his Honorary Degree at UPM's 26th Convocation ceremony, the 68-year-old was upbeat about the project, saying the city would be a fusion of nature and high-technology.

"The `Eco' represents biotechnology and `Media' represents Information Technology. The City is a combination of Biovalley and Cyberjaya.

"Dr Mahathir has been very positive (about the project). We still need to do many things before the project can be finalised. Hopefully, this will take one year," he said.

This included a feasibility study, preparing adequate resources and educating and training staff, he added.

"The government must secure the property first, allocate the budget and determine how many foreign companies will be located in the city. Therefore a strategy is needed," he said.

He said the project would not just be a Malaysian but an international project, which was why he had recently organised a meeting for the "Japan Supporting Committee for Biovalley Malaysia" in Tokyo, Japan.

The committee comprised professors, researchers, chief executive officers of pharmaceutical companies and bio-technology academics.

"Malaysia must take advantage of the species and genome your rainforests offer. The potential for these hidden resources could be bigger than oil resources."

He said the theme for the City would be similar to the KLIA, which would be based on his "Philosophy of Symbiosis".

Bio-electronics, he said, would be used to combine agricultural practices with high-technology like the Internet and mini-sensors.

"In this way, we can practise high-density agriculture and be able to determine the best soil and best conditions for planting," he said.

He said UPM was the best university for agriculture studies, as it had a rich history of research that could be put to good use.

The renowned architect is the president of the Japan Society of Landscape Design and a senior adviser for the 2005 Aichi International Expo.

He is also the adviser of the Municipal Government of Jiaozuo in China and received the International CITIES Award for Excellence from the Foundation Metropoli in Spain.

Asked whether he was satisfied with the KLIA, he beamed and said: "I was at a recent meeting of 10,000 architects at the Union of International Architects and it was said that KLIA was the best airport in the world."