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MTDC-BUSINESS
BAHRAIN AND MALAYSIAN BUSINESSMEN TO GAIN FROM MTDC

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MANAMA, April 21 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said that Bahraini and Malaysian businessmen would gain from an enhanced business ties with the establishment of the Malaysian Trade and Distribution Centre (MTDC).

The centre, located on a 70,000 sq metres area at Durrat Al Bahrain in Seef here, would be Malaysia's first comprehensive trade exhibition and distribution centre in West Asia.

"Consumers in Bahrain and the region will have opportunities not only to know more about Malaysian products and services, but also able to purchase them direct from the retail outlets at the centre," said Dr Mahathir.

"For the traders, purchases can be made from the centre for distribution or re-export to the countries in the region."

"This will certainly lead to more exchanges of trade between the two countries," the prime minister said at the official launching of the construction of MTDC today.

Covering a total floor space of over 37,000 sq metres, the centre would have two main buildings for retail and warehouse facilities.

Dr Mahathir, on the last leg of his three nation visit which includes Morocco and Libya, said that the emporium/hypermarket would provide retail space for a wide range of "Made-in Malaysia" products.

He said the centre provides Malaysian companies a platform to explore and familiarise themselves with potential and emerging markets in West Asia.

"The centre will also facilitate export through bulk shipment to Bahrain and the surrounding markets which will help reduce costs of transportation and handling," he said.

The warehousing facilities are conducive for bulk-breaking and repacking of smaller orders for redistribution to buyers and importers in the region," Dr Mahathir said.

To make it attractive to families, the centre would have entertainment facilities, food outlets, specialty shops, cineplex, sales, service centre and gymnasium.

The centre would also boast floor space for Malaysian exporters demonstrate their products, a resource library, audio visual facilities, conference and seminar rooms and offices for the Malaysian External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE) and Malaysian Tourism Promotion Board (MTPB).

Dr Mahathir said the centre would soon become a new landmark building in Bahrain, particularly Manama as it incorporates Malaysian architecture and design features.

The project, said Mahathir, saw inputs from both countries with the Bahrain government providing the land while the Malaysian government the design and construction as well as the management and operation.

The centre, to be operational by early 2004, would complement the services sector on banking, insurance and port facilities that are made available by Malaysian firms in Bahrain.

Dr Mahathir also said that Bahrain was selected as the location for the centre as it is gaining importance as a re-export and distribution centre in West Asia and the neighbouring countries given its well-developed port, airport and logistics facilities.

Its status as the banking and insurance services hub for West Asia was also a contributing factor, he added. -- BERNAMA
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