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Mahathir-Embassy  
PM OPENS NEW MALAYSIAN EMBASSY BUILDING IN BERLIN

By: Abdul Muin Abdul Majid

BERLIN, March 20 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Tuesday opened the Malaysian embassy building in this historic German capital city.

Speaking at the embassy located in Klingelhoferstr 6, he described it as Malaysia's modest contribution to the architecture of the new Berlin.

"It has been hardly two years that the capital moved from Bonn to Berlin but already Berlin appears very comfortable in its role as the capital," said Dr Mahathir who is on a three-day official visit to Germany.

Dr Mahathir said that in the space of less than two years, Berlin had also won the acceptance not merely of the German people but of the whole world as the capital of Germany.

The 3,750 sq metre five-level building was completed in 2000 and features, among others, two parallel wings, an underground car park, eight apartment units and uses Malaysian timber in its finishing.

Dr Mahathir said that when Germany made the decision to switch its capital from Bonn to Berlin, Malaysia moved with alacrity its embassy to this city.

The Prime Minister said that there was also a need in Malaysia for the transfer of some embassies to the new federal administrative capital of Putrajaya.

"As they say, one good turn deserves another," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that it was a great pleasure for him to be in Berlin, a city he last visited in 1988 when the "Berlin Wall" had not yet been dismantled.

The wall, he said, stood as an ominous reminder that not merely was Berlin divided but Germany too was divided physically and ideologically.

But following the tumultuous events that unfolded with the collapse of the Soviet bloc, Berlin was once again free and Germany reunited.

"Now, revisiting Berlin almost 12 years after the dismantling of the wall, it is such a pleasure for me to see a new, vibrant Berlin which has once again become the capital of a united Germany," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that he noted the obvious signs of renewal and hope everywhere in Berlin from the construction of modern new buildings like those in the Potsdamer Platz to the restoration of splendid old buildings along the Unter Den Linden and elsewhere in the city.

The Prime Minister arrived in Berlin from Munich Tuesday afternoon and on the final day of his visit to Germany Wednesday, he will hold talks with German Chancellor Gerhard Schroder and meet President of the German Bundestag (the lower house of Parliament) Wolfgang Thierse.

Dr Mahathir is also scheduled to hold discussions with German opinion leaders at the Foundation for Science and Politics, a German think-tank, and later on tour the Adlershof City of Science, Technology and Media.

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