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Mahathir-Putrajaya

BUILDING PUTRAJAYA IS MONEY WELL SPENT, SAYS PM

PUTRAJAYA, June 9 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the money spent by the government on building Putrajaya is justified as it is built not for him but for the future of the country.

The prime minister said that there was no reason why Malaysians should not have an impressive administrative capital with buildings built to last, just like other countries.

"I do hope Malaysia will continue to progress long after I am gone. Although I am gone, I will be hovering up there to see that the job is done (down here)," he said at the handing over of the RM650 million Putrajaya Convention Centre (PCC) by Putrajaya Holdings Sdn Bhd to the government at the centre in Precinct 5, here.

In jest Dr Mahathir said he hoped that the future prime minister would not decide to build another city for himself.

The handing over of the PCC was done by Putrajaya Holdings chairman Datuk Mohamed Hashim Hassan to Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Samsudin Othman, witnessed by Dr Mahathir.

As a symbol of the handover, Mohamed Hashim presented an oil painting by artist Riaz Ahmad Jamil Ahmad to Samsuddin.

Dr Mahathir said he was proud that the "fantastic" PCC had been completed and that this was done ahead of time. It was completed in slightly less than two years.

But then, he said, Malaysians were used to building things in record time, just like in the case of Putrajaya.

"That is what Malaysians do without batting an eyelid. In other countries, it will take a longer time. In Malaysia, we build whole towns, many can be seen sprouting throughout the country complete with schools, hospitals and other amenities," said a visibly pleased Dr Mahathir.

The prime minister, who earlier toured the PCC, perched on a hill 60m above sea level in Precinct 5, congratulated Putrajaya Holdings, IJM Corporation Bhd and architecture firm Hijjas Kasturi and Associates for their ability to carry out the PCC project successfully.

The convention centre is inspired by the diamond-shaped "pending perak" or silver royal belt buckle.

Meanwhile, Dr Mahathir urged those involved to promote the PCC, including by inviting convention planners and convenors to visit it.

"They should come here and see the facility so that they will have their conventions here," he said, adding that visitors to Putrajaya should be allowed to make a detour to the PCC.

He said brochures on the convention centre should also be prepared for distribution.

In his speech earlier, Mohamed Hashim said that it all began about three years ago when Dr Mahathir shared his vision for a convention centre designed to meet international standards and support events of global standing and scale.

"He saw this centre sited right here in Precinct 5 and indeed, he even saw in his vision the tree-lined boulevard leading to the centre.

"And, as with most visions of our prime minister, he saw this development completed within a very short time-frame," he added.

With a gross floor area of about 1.35 million sq ft over a total of nine levels, the PCC has, among others, VVIP rooms, meeting rooms, restaurants, public galleries, prayer rooms and banquet halls.

The largest of them all is the magnificent Plenary Hall which can seat up to 3,000 people.

-- BERNAMA

MAM RIZ JK