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MAHATHIR-MSC

MSC, NOW A REALITY AND A SUCCESS, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

CYBERJAYA, July 29 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad says those who still doubted that the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) project would be a reality should look at the number of MSC-status companies registered todate.

He said that while the government had originally targeted to have 500 MSC-status companies by 2003, the number now stood at around 800 companies.

"If that is not success, then what is success," he said at the official opening of the Ericsson@MSC building here, he said.

Ericsson@MSC, costing RM80 million, is Ericsson's regional hub and headquarters for Ericsson Malaysia.

The building houses a flagship showcase of "live" networks showing the evolution of mobile telecommunications standard from Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) to third generation.

Dr Mahathir said it was companies like Ericsson that aided the government's aspiration in turning Cyberjaya into a hub for information age industry a success.

"We are now seeing many more companies moving into Cyberjaya," he added.

Malaysia, he said, was "glad to be associated" with Ericsson as it has the edge in telecommunications technology and the foresight on what future technology would be.

"We want to move along with the rest of the world and want to ensure that we are conversant with state-of-the-art technology," said Dr Mahathir.

Later, when opening the HSBC Electronic Data Processing (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd here also, he said sceptics of the MSC project would now have to swallow their words like those who had also condemned the national car project.

"We are familiar with people telling us that what we are doing is wrong but it has been shown that they'll have to swallow their words later on," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the government was not too worried about that kind of people.

He said the government's business-friendly policy had paid off handsomely as many companies wanted to invest in Malaysia.

"Thanks to that policy, Malaysia had attracted foreign investments long before +Foreign Direct Investment+ became a favourite catchphrase," he said.

Beginning with the electronics industry in the 1970s, he said, Malaysia had now turned to information technology (IT) to spur its economy further.

Dr Mahathir said the decision by major companies such as HSBC to set up the facility in Cyberjaya was a good one as the intelligent city was specifically built to cater to the needs of businesses operating on a worldwide basis.

It is HSBC's sixth and largest group service centre (GSC) where all kinds of transactions will be processed namely those sent from group offices in the United States, the United Arab Emirates, Singapore, Hong Kong, Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

The other GSCs are in Hyderabad and Bangalore in India and Shanghai and Guangzhou in China.

Speaking at a press conference, HSBC Group chief operating officer, Alan Jebson, said that the company would be investing some RM80 million for

its Malaysian GSC over the next three years,

He said that the GSC was expected to employ 550 people by year-end.

Currently operating in a temporary building, the GSC, which started operation in April this year, would move to a purpose-built facility of 200,000 square feet.

The new building, located just across the road from the current one is due for completion next year. -- BERNAMA

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