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Mahathir-Centres

PM ALLAYS FEARS OF GLUT OF CONVENTION CENTRES IN THE CITY

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 11 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has dismissed the notion that there is a glut of meeting, international convention and exhibition centres in the city.

He said that there was an increasing demand for rooms, halls, meetings and convention centres as Kuala Lumpur has become a very well-developed capital city.

"Kuala Lumpur is growing. The demand for rooms is also growing. Demand for meeting and international convention, exhibition centres are growing...all these are very necessary.

"Currently, it's difficult to book places for functions. Weddings are now held in hotels, unlike before when they're held at home with tents erected. Many weddings are held in hotels, (also) meetings, international conventions. They're not enough places. Many people have to postpone their functions because they cannot book a place.

"So, I don't think there is an excess," he told reporters after launching the development of the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre, soon to be a new distinctive landmark in the capital city, heretoday.

Asked how he felt as he has left so many tangible things for the development of Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya, Dr Mahathir said: "I don't know whether I left it or something, anything that has got to do with me. I'm satisfied with the fact that Malaysia is a peaceful place."

Earlier in his speech, Dr Mahathir said that he was happy that the Kuala Lumpur City Centre (KLCC) precinct, formerly a racecourse, could be developed to be the most beautiful and most modern in the country.

"The KLCC is a developing project as several more projects will be sited there but the important thing is that it has been determined in all the plans for its development that 50 per cent of the area has been designated as a park and for recreation," he said.

He said that the park around the KLCC has injected greater value to the development in the area.

Saying that he was glad that the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre would finally materialise, he expressed confidence that the KLCC would become more attractive and contribute towards a demand of a Kuala Lumpur metropolitan city.

The prime minister said the convention centre is a much needed facility for a city the size of Kuala Lumpur as it is difficult at times to get a hall for various functions, and that people need to queue up and delay their affairs.

"I am sure with the state-of-the-art facilities provided at the convention centre would meet most of our needs for certain times at least. Besides it being much needed, it would also contribute to the architecture of Kuala Lumpur.

"We would like to see this place become the centre for gathering of the people in Kuala Lumpur and the whole of Malaysia," he said.

He said that with the convention centre there will be more halls for people to carry out whatever social and commercial activities they need.

On the Convention Centre in Putrajaya, Dr Mahathir said the centre would cater for more specific activities, such as international meetings for heads of government and their supporting staff.

"The design is quite different and is meant to cater a different kind of activity, which also of course can be carried out here," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Putrajaya, as the new administrative capital of the Federal Government, needs its own conference centre as it is going to receive a lot of visitors from other countries and hosting a number of international meetings.

That however does not mean that the convention centre in KLCC is going to duplicate what is going to be provided in Putrajaya, he said.

Saying that the garden and parks in the KLCC are very popular, he said that if the developers could blend the surrounding buildings with the garden it would certainly enhance the value of the buildings as well as making the garden more attractive.

Dr Mahathir, who is a nature lover and environmentally conscious, said more and more people will be congregating at KLCC to enjoy its surroundings.

Congratulating Petroliam Nasional Berhad (Petronas) and KLCC Holdings Berhad for taking up the challenge and ensuring that the project will become a reality, the prime minister said the project was a good venture.

He said that by late next year by which the time the centre was expected to have been completed, the economy would have recovered.

"This is our hope, of course, things are not very certain at the moment but we have to look at our internal strength in order to overcome the problems posed by the declining economy of the world.

"Despite all the uncertainties, I feel certain that there will be a success for this convention centre," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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