

20/07/2004

A monument for our five PMs

PUTRAJAYA, Mon. - Another landmark is coming up in the federal administrative centre to embody the contributions of the country's prime ministers.

The RM40 million Mercutanda Perdana will give Malaysians an insight into the national ethos framed by the four past prime ministers as well as the leadership of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

To be built on a 1.6ha site allocated by Putrajaya Holdings in Taman Puncak Puteri in Precinct 4, the project will start in October with completion targeted for 2006.

The site is in a scenic part of Putrajaya, facing a lake and the Seri Gemilang bridge.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, who unveiled the project today, said it comprised a Keris monument and a two-storey gallery, and would be an expression of the people's tribute to the five prime ministers.

Its construction will be funded by contributions, largely from the private sector.

It will have seven galleries, with five housing exhibits on the country's prime ministers - Tunku Abdul Rahman, Tun Abdul Razak, Tun Hussein Onn, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Abdullah - and two showcasing displays and documents on Vision 2020.

Visitors will be able to access archived materials on the five prime ministers through static displays, touch and plasma screens and hologrammes.

The building will also have a cafeteria, auditorium, theatrette and viewing deck with telescopes.

Najib, who is also the project's patron, said companies and individuals could contribute to the project, adding a fund-raising drive would be launched soon.

"In remembering the leaders' contributions in nation-building, Malaysians can also study and learn historic events that the country has witnessed," Najib said.

The New Straits Times Press (M) Berhad, 59 Corporation and F.I Architects Sdn Bhd are companies behind the project.

NSTP group general manager for communications and editorial marketing Datuk Ahmad A. Talib said the gallery would be a complete one-stop centre for those who wanted a comprehensive insight into the legacies of Malaysian leaders.

NST, he said, would draw from its 159 years of archives to supply the galleries with materials on the PMs.

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