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Kedah to get assembly hall for Malays

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - Dewan Perhimpunan Melayu Kedah (DPMK) plans to build an eight-storey office building-cum-multipurpose hall in Alor Star with the objective of uniting the Malays.

The ground-breaking ceremony is scheduled for July and the RM10 million building is expected to be completed by the end of next year.

DPMK president Tan Sri Khalid Abdullah said this would be the first assembly hall to be built for the Malays in the State.

"The Chinese community has 20 assembly halls in Kedah while the Indians have one.

"Unfortunately, the Malays have none. That is why we have decided to build one," he said after the launch of the building fund by Employees' Provident Fund chairman Tan Sri Abdul Halim Ali at the Putra World Trade Centre today.

Halim, who is from Kedah, launched the fund in his capacity as former Chief Secretary to the Government.

Although the DPMK was established in 1996, Khalid said it was only now that its vision of having a building was becoming a reality.

"The land, costing some RM2 million, was donated by Tan Sri Syed Mokhtar Al-Bukhary of Yayasan Al-Bukhary while the steel structures for the construction of the building, also about RM2 million, were donated by Maju Holdings Sdn Bhd," he said.

Khalid said about RM5.5 million was needed to complete the project, which would be obtained through donations from corporate leaders, the private sector, individuals and well-wishers.

DPMK plans to rent out the ground and mezzanine floor to the banking and financial sector.

Khalid said the multipurpose hall, which would be able to accommodate more than 1,000 people, would be used for educational, cultural, economic and social programmes and training activities besides meetings and gatherings.

DPMK has about 110 members comprising professionals such as doctors, lawyers, engineers and academicians.

It also has representatives from organisations and associations.

Earlier at the launch, Halim said he hoped the Malays in Kedah would donate to the project which would become a landmark of Malay achievement.

He added that the project would have a significance especially with two prime ministers coming from Kedah - Tengku Abdul Rahman and Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

At the launch, a representative of Syed Mokhtar from Yayasan Al-Bukhary, Ismail Yusof, presented the land grant to Halim while Maju Holdings managing director Datuk Abu Talib Mohamad presented the pledge to donate the steel structures.

The executive chairman of EUPE Corporation Berhad, Datuk Tajudin Hashim, and executive chairman of Julong Sdn Bhd, Ahmad Nawar Rejab, donated RM50,000 each to the fund.

The fund now stands at RM230,000.