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New national palace to be built in Jalan Duta

PUTRAJAYA, Mon. - The Government will build a new national palace in Kuala Lumpur for the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said the new national palace, to be located along Jalan Duta, would replace the existing palace in Jalan Istana.

"Now we have to look for ways to finance the development of the new national palace without burdening the Government," he said.

Dr Mahathir was speaking to reporters after a two-hour visit to the Istana Melawati at Precinct 1 here which is in its final stages of completion.

Set majestically on a hill facing the government buildings, the Prime Minister's Department and the Putrajaya lake, the RM90 million Istana Melawati, designed by well-known architect Datuk Raja Kamarul Bahrin Shah, is scheduled to host the next Rulers' Conference.

Commenting on its architecture, Dr Mahathir said he was satisfied with the design and "traditional touch" of the sprawling structure on the 6.9-hectare site.

"This palace reflects the original Malay architecture. It expresses our culture. Although the cost is quite high, we have to accept the fact that a palace must be as such.

"This is for the Yang di-Pertuan Agong when His Majesty is in Putrajaya. His Majesty could stay here, hold meetings or receptions. This is not to replace the national palace ... this is Istana Hinggap," Dr Mahathir said.

Dr Mahathir was accompanied by his wife Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Putrajaya Holdings president Tan Sri Azizan Zainul Abidin and Raja Kamarul.