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`MSC potential source of income'

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CYBERJAYA, Fri. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad launched the second phase of the Multimedia Super Corridor tonight, optimistic that the projects had the potential to become a source of income and pride for the nation.

The Prime Minister, who chaired the Seventh MSC International Advisory Panel meeting for the last time on Thursday, said the MSC enjoyed the international Information Technology fraternity's strong support.

This had placed it on a strong footing to progress, even without Dr Mahathir in the driver's seat.

"When we started this project in 1996 we thought it will take a very long time but now we are already here and are already venturing into the second phase. We in Malaysia are very ambitious. That's why we built the tallest building in the world, and it is also part of our ambition to go into the information age and benefit from it.

"Because of MSC we have made a lot of progress in the application of IT. So we are on the highway and we hope to go forward on this highway with the help of our friends from the IT companies who have decided to help us as members of the advisory panel," Dr Mahathir said at his symbolic launch of the second phase themed "Metamorphosis - Reflecting the transformation of MSC from concept to reality and into the Second Phase".

The Prime Minister, who has been the driving force and the source of inspiration in the development of the MSC, said that the seventh MSC IAP meeting churned out a host of ideas and suggestions pertaining to its future.

"I'm quite sure the second phase will develop as importantly and just as fascinating as the first phase. That is what we look forward to. Of course, I will not be chairing the future meetings of the IAP but I'll follow the meetings very closely.

"Somebody said I have a bad habit of visiting construction sites and checking on building plans. That is because they say the devil is in the details... so I like to look at the details because I'm a bit of a devil myself," he said in jest, to loud applause from the floor.

Present at the launch-cum-dinner were Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Multimedia Development Corporation chairman Tan Sri Abdul Halim Ali, MDC chief executive officer Datuk Dr Mohamaed Arif Nun, IAP panel members and representatives.

Earlier in the day, Abdullah reaffirmed that Dr Mahathir will continue to play a role in helping spur further development of the MSC after his retirement next month.

He said everyone welcomed Dr Mahathir's continued involvement in the project.

"We all welcome him. But as for what specific role he will be playing, I will have to discuss this with him," Abdullah said.

Abdullah reiterated his commitment towards making the MSC his priority when he became Prime Minister.

He said he had assured IAP members of this, and they had, in turn, stated that they would continue giving their commitment to the project.