

THE STAR

DATE: 2/2/2010

By **JO TIMBUONG**  
[intech@thestar.com.my](mailto:intech@thestar.com.my)

**SHAH AJAM:** Smart property developments, such as the i-City project here, complement the MSC Malaysia hub - Cyberjaya – by providing additional facilities that are vital for the country's IT industry, said Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The former Prime Minister, who came up with the MSC Malaysia initiative 14 years ago during his tenure, said such developments also help accelerate the country's efforts to develop a high-income economy because they promote innovation.

He said I-Bhd, the property developer for i-City, has done a good job with the project because it provides all sorts of modern information and communications infrastructure, as well as incubation facilities for innovative companies to develop their ideas.

"The whole project is an incubator, which is a very important important facility for ideas generation," he said after visiting i-City last week.

Mahathir believes the private sector plays a key role in the country's move to develop a high-income economy. "Our economy has changed. We've moved away from labour-intensive to brain-intensive industries," he said.

Furthermore, he said, the private sector is better able to understand the new ideas that come in, and can

# NATION'S PROGRESS RESTS ON PRIVATE SECTOR, NOT FDI's



**SMART CITY:** Eu Hong Chew, chief executive officer of I-Bhd (left) showing Mahathir the model impression of i-City. With them is Tan Sri Law Hieng Ding, former Science, Technology and Environment Minister.

appreciate research findings that have commercial value.

He said researchers only know that they have found something fantastic but do not know how to turn it into something marketable.

"This is a big problem and I think business-minded people are more

able to turn such findings into something profitable," he added.

Mahathir took a swipe at civil servants who do not make an effort to understand new ideas.

"Sometimes someone creative may be met by a civil servant who is not well versed in IT. You cannot

» Our economy has changed. We've moved away from labour-intensive to brain-intensive industries «

TUN DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD, FORMER PRIME MINISTER

make any progress from people like these," he said.

## On our own feet

He said efforts by local companies like I-Bhd to boost industries here will help wean the country off its dependence on foreign direct investments (FDIs).

"The new strategy is to not depend on FDIs but on local investors that help local businesses grow into world-class companies," he said.

FDIs initially helped create jobs in the country but now these bring little benefit, Mahathir said, adding that it is the local industry players who can do more for the economy now.

"Benefits from FDIs are small. The investors come here with 10% capi-

tal and pay no taxes but make all the profit," he said. "A local business would be able to create jobs and its profits will also benefit the country."

i-City is a 72-acre ICT (information and communications technology) based commercial project in Section 7, comprising office suites, shopping mall, datacentre, hotels, office towers, and serviced apartments – all with smart buildings.

When completed in 2012, it will feature 20Mbps (megabits per second) high-speed multi-telco broadband connectivity that is scalable to 1Gbps (gigabit per second), a Tier-4 ready datacentre, and a shared concierge service.

There is now a knowledge community in i-City, comprising a mix of organisations from private and government agencies.