

Malaysia a 'developed' nation in no time if ...

RUSS. T. 21 MAY 1979

By JACOB PAUL

MALAYSIA could become a "developed" nation in a short period if only the people could forget their feelings of dissatisfaction and work for the nation, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said in Johore Baru yesterday.

He added that there was nothing to stop the country from attaining the "developed nation" status as it was not only rich in natural resources but had the ability to do so.

However, Datuk Seri Mahathir said that there was bound to be dissatisfaction among all the races as not all they wanted could be given.

In Malaysia's multi-racial context, it was not possible for any government to satisfy all the people, he said.

"We can only provide equality of dissatisfaction," he said. "But, this we consider a success for our country."

He said that it was better for all the races to be equally dissatisfied than for just one race to be satisfied, especially when the balance between the bumiputras and non-bumiputras was equal.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir was addressing heads of departments at the Tun Abdul Razak Operations Room at the State Secretariat before a briefing by the heads.

"The government cannot satisfy everybody," he said. "We can only give a little here and a little there."

He added that leaders of the country should understand this. They should also make the people understand this.

If the people understood that they could not get all that they desired, they will continue to live in peace and the nation will continue to prosper, he said.

He criticised foreigners who are fond of predicting about the

country's inter-racial harmony and prosperity.

He said that since independence these people have been predicting that the harmony would not last and that the days of prosperity would end.

He said that often he has told foreign reporters that the government did not aim to satisfy everybody.

He added that the solutions often suggested by these foreigners were not solutions but ways to make things worse.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir also praised Johore for its state of development and paid tribute to the hearty welcome given him and his wife yesterday.

Earlier, in welcoming Datuk Dr Seri Mahathir to Johore, Mentri Besar Tan Sri Haji Othman Saat said that more than 80 per cent of the vacancies for Federal and state posts in Johore have been filled.

He said that there were only 216 Federal vacancies and 255 state vacancies compared with 800 before the exercise started.

He expressed confidence that the state administration would now be carried out more smoothly.

The various heads of departments also briefed Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir on the progress and problems of their particular areas of operation.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir and Datin Dr Siti Asmah were given a grand and traditional welcome in three places — at the airport, at Tampoi (point of entry to Johore Baru district) and at Jalan Ah Fook.

The welcome was complete with lines of VIPs, kompong groups, lion dances, Indian music and schoolchildren lining the routes.

The Deputy Prime Minister Datin Dr Siti Asmah were later received in audience by the Sultan and Sultanah of Johore.