

PM on State-Federal co-operation

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PENANG, Mon. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad today stressed the need for the States to maintain closer co-operation with the Federal Government to facilitate development.

He said this was necessary as development projects require huge sums of money which could be made available to the State only by the Federal Government.

"But co-operation can only exist if people in the State administration are from the same group as the people in the Federal Government," he said at the initial piling works of the \$744 million Penang bridge linking the island to the mainland.

Among those present were Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah, Chief Minister Dr Lim Chong Eu, Datuk Samy Vellu, Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Dr Goh Cheng Teik, the Korean Ambassador and senior Government officials.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said if a different group was in the State, the Federal Government could still provide the funds but without the co-operation there would be no progress.

He said the people from the different groups might reject the Federal funds saying that they were not necessary.

By ZAINON AHMAD

"And if we ignore them altogether they may say that we are being unfair," he said.

"It is not a question of fairness but a question of a State amiable to the Federal Government."

The Prime Minister said the people of Penang were lucky to have so many development projects in their State due to the close co-operation between the State Government led by the Gerakan and the Federal Government.

He said the Penang bridge, together with roads connecting it to the other main roads, and entailing an expenditure of more than a billion doll-

ars was only a dream until the Gerakan decided to join the Barisan Nasional.

"The bridge is scheduled for completion in 1985 and its realisation depends on the people of Penang," he said.

The Prime Minister said some people have criticised the Government for the bridge project saying that it would create problems, and if the Government did not implement the project they would also criticise the Government for lack of initiative.

The Government, he said, had seriously considered the matter and decided that the benefits the bridge would bring far outweigh the problems, if any.