

DR M WARNS BUSINESS

QUOTE

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— Dr Mahathir

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By KALIMULLAH HASSAN

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. ^② The Prime Minister warned what he described as a "not very appreciative" business sector today that electricity and telephone rates would be raised to previous levels if businessmen did not use rate cuts to help fight the recession.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, obviously angered at the negative response to the recent cuts, said: "At least (with the higher rates) the Government will get the money."

Dr Mahathir, speaking at the

launching of the Che Wan Development Company's luxury condominium project in Ampang this morning, said the Government had reduced rates and had taken other measures to help cut production and business costs.

"But the business people are not very appreciative," he said. "They say the reductions in telephone charges are not enough ... that the lower electricity rates make no difference in lowering the cost of production.

"If the steps we are taking do not help, we have to consider withdrawing the new rates and going back to the old rates. At least then the Govern-

ment will get the money.

"Some people like me in the Government like to be appreciated when we do something for the good (of people).

"We feel extremely hurt when we give something and the people say it is nothing ... it doesn't matter. The Government is trying to give the business people what it can. But when we do, no one says thank you. I hope the people concerned understand what I am trying to say."

The day after the Government announced power rate cuts of between four and 15 per cent for commercial, industrial and mining consumers early this week, the manufacturers' association said the cuts were marginal and unlikely to lead to any significant savings.

Today, Dr Mahathir said that "it was fortunate" Malaysia's economic recession was not as bad as that in neighbouring countries. "However ... until we tide this over, we have to tighten our belts," he said.

Che Wan Development, an Ipoh based company, is building 28 standard and two "super-penthouse" luxury condominiums at Ampang.

The project is scheduled for completion by the end of next year. The company has pledged to donate \$30,000 to a charity of the Prime Minister's wife's choosing for every standard-type unit block sold.