

Council tells state govts to help speed up recovery

STATE governments have been urged to play an active role in speeding up economic recovery.

The Umno Supreme Council feels state governments, for a start, should lower prices of land earmarked for development and accelerate the process of alienating such land.

Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said after a Supreme Council meeting yesterday that land is an important aspect of the economy.

It so happens that state governments have a lot of say in it, he added.

"As we know, building costs are high because land is expensive. At the same time, procedures on land matters take time and this means high holding cost.

"Therefore we need state governments to lower prices and expedite land procedures to propel economic recovery," Dr Mahathir told reporters.

Apart from land matters, which are still within the jurisdiction of state governments, the Prime Minister said the meeting also discussed other measures that states could adopt to improve the economy, including their roles in the implementation of the Fifth Malaysia Plan.

However, Dr Mahathir did not elaborate on these points.

The meeting lasted four hours and apart from the current economic situation, political developments were also discussed.

Three Supreme Council members — deputy president Datuk Musa Hitam, treasurer-general Daim Zainuddin and vice-president Datuk Seri Haji Wan Mokhtar Ahmad — were absent.