

Dr M. Do not use the law to stop progress

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JOHORE BARU, Fri. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the law should not be used as a tool to hamper the Government's development efforts.

"If this country is going to progress, the law should not be used to frustrate necessary actions, particularly by the Government," the Prime Minister told newsmen here at the end of his two-day official visit to Johore.

Dr Mahathir also reiterated his call to leaders of Barisan Nasional parties to avoid making public their stand on particular issues, adding that the BN had a proper channel to deal with these issues.

"For the past 40 years, the BN and its predecessor, the Alliance, have managed to solve almost all issues through consultation

□ PM LAMENTS 'HIT AND RUN' BUSINESS STYLE: P13

and I don't see any reason why the existing issues can not be resolved in the same manner."

To a question, he said that the BN had no plan to take action against leaders who spoke out but added that his appeal in Alor Star two weeks ago to do away with excessive politicking had to a certain extent been effective.

He stressed that BN members should refrain from capitalising on political and petty issues and should instead get on with the job of helping the country in its economic recovery.

He said he repeated this appeal during separate meetings with heads of State Umno divisions here yesterday and leaders of the BN component parties today.

Dr Mahathir also spoke on the highway toll issue, especially with regard to the reported dispute between the Selangor and Federal Governments over the proposed toll collection along Federal Highway

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"There is no conflict ... that is a matter that can be resolved between the State and Federal Governments."

He dismissed suggestions that Selangor was taking a hard line over the matter and said he had received a letter from Menteri Besar Datuk Muhammad Haji Muhammad Taib regarding it.

"We will study and we will resolve this matter. There is no problem," the Prime Minister said.

Dr Mahathir said that the

toll system for the country's new highways was necessary as "one way or another you have to pay for these roads.

"The public has to pay for these roads ... there is no such thing as free facilities. All facilities will have to be paid for by the people using them.

"The question that arises is who pays," he said, adding that he had already explained this when he opened the Senawang-Air Keroh expressway recently.

"But, apparently, that went unnoticed."

Asked whether the Government has plans to do away

with toll collection and instead incorporate this in road tax, he replied: "That can be done if you want people who do not use the highway to pay for those who are going to use the highway."

"But the increase in the road tax will be about double in order to pay for the highways. If they (the public) are prepared to pay double, or 10 sen more per litre of oil, then we can do that."

"I'm quite sure there will be howls if the Government says you have to pay 10 sen more per litre of oil."

He also said that the Government had no plan to build alternative roads to the highways.

"If there are no such routes, the Government is not responsible for providing them."

On former Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman's call that Umno should not go into business and instead concentrate on politics, he said he subscribed to the idea if "there are people willing to give \$360 million to pay for the Umno headquarters building."

"Umno has always been in business because of the need to raise funds. Alternatively, we can raise donations from the people but there are accusations that Umno is accepting bribes which is also wrong. I'd be glad if anybody can find a solution for me." — Bernama