

WE'RE ON OUR WAY

PM: Industrialisation successful and growth rate to go up

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. — Malaysia's industrialisation programme has been highly successful and the nation's growth rate is poised to increase in the future, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister urged foreign investors not to be pessimistic over Malaysia's present low growth rates.

He said that besides achieving success in the industrialisation programme, Malaysia had also entered the high-tech and heavy industry areas.

"The formulation and implementation of the Industrial Master Plan, with its emphasis on export-oriented manufacturing sector, will accelerate industrial growth areas.

"We also have the resources, ingredients and resilience to steer out of the present setbacks to higher economic

growth in the years to come," he added at the opening of the three-day Asia-Pacific Real Estate Congress held here.

His speech was read out by Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Raja Ariffin Raja Sulaiman.

Dr Mahathir said the Government's strategy to diversify the country's commodity-based economy by embarking on a programme of industrialisation with emphasis on manufacturing for export more than a decade ago "has proven to be right."

"Our achievements in the manufacturing sector in the last few years have helped to cushion the effects of declining commodity prices and demands."

"With the recent introduction of various measures and generous incentives for investments, and with the improvement in prices of some primary commodities, we are optimistic of the future."

Dr Mahathir was also confident that the construction and real estate industry would pick up because of the Government's policy to encourage property ownership.

He urged foreign investors to take the opportunity to make long-term investments in Malaysian real estate since the Government had made a "significant change" to enable foreigners to buy various types of land.

Dr Mahathir said that although there were Malaysian technocrats and professionals looking into more expeditious methods of construction, there was still room for foreign expertise and capital investment.

He added that with lower prices for some building materials and a reduction in construction costs, developers and entrepreneurs with the right strategies could enjoy a reasonable margin of profit for medium-cost houses.