

It's too costly to patrol our EEZ: Dr M

JELI, Fri. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the Government is unlikely to set up a task force to patrol the Exclusive Economic Zone against intrusion by foreign fishermen as it is too costly.

"It would require between \$40,000 to \$50,000 daily to adequately patrol the EEZ," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the sum was too large and might take away funds reserved for other areas of development.

Speaking at the closing ceremony of the motivation course for penghulus at Kem Seri Pergau here, he urged people to venture into deep sea fishing to help upgrade their standard of living.

Dr Mahathir said since independence, the country has experienced rapid development brought by the Government.

However, he added that despite the 30 years of independence, the attitude of the people had not changed.

"We still have a society who depend solely on the Government to help them to survive," said Dr Mahathir.

The people's life would not change if they were reluctant to work harder and fully grabbed every opportunity provided by the Government to upgrade the standard of living.

Dr Mahathir also touched on the influx of illegal immi-

grants into the country.

He said the people should be blamed for the problem if they were reluctant to work harder and fill all the job opportunities in the country.

He cited the reluctance of "our own people" to work harder as the major factor which had led foreigners to come and work here.

Later Dr Mahathir presented certificates to all the village headmen who attended the motivation course.

He was then taken on a tour around Kem Pergau and joined residents for Friday prayer at Kalai mosque.

At the same time, his wife Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah met with Jeli Wanita leaders at the Kalai Balai Raya.

The Prime Minister was accompanied by Menteri Besar Datuk Haji Mohamed Yaacob, Foreign Minister Tengku Ahmad Rithauddeen, State Exco members and State Assemblymen.

The Prime Minister and his entourage landed at the army camp in Batu 15, Jeli, in a helicopter and was driven to Kem Pergau where about 3,000 people gathered to welcome him.

On arrival at Kem Pergau, the Prime Minister inspected a guard of honour mounted by 81 penghulus.

The Prime Minister left for Kota Baru about 2.30pm by helicopter which took off from Sekolah Kebangsaan Kalai.