

PM raps 'heads-I-win-tails-you-lose' critics

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MIRI, Mon. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today took to task critics of development projects who change tunes when their predictions are off.

The Prime Minister said when a project is completed the critics would say it is a waste of money but when facilities are inadequate because of increasing demand they would say that the Government is not doing enough.

Citing the example of Subang International Airport, he said when it was opened in 1964, critics had said that the Government was wasting good money.

However, when the projection of 400,000 passengers within 20 years was far exceeded by the actual passenger load of three million, they said the Government was not doing enough for the airport.

**By K. BALA and
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Similarly, when the Muda irrigation scheme was implemented, some people had described it as a waste of money. However, now there is a clamour to expand the project to enable more farmers to carry out double cropping of padi.

He said the Government, which is confident of continued economic growth, will continue to undertake various development projects for the benefit of the people.

Sabotage

"It is better to build airports and other infrastructure even if we have to take loans now than wait later when the cost of implementing them would have gone up."

The Prime Minister was speaking at the official open-

ing of the \$17 million new terminal building for Miri Airport.

He was confident that the new facilities would spur growth in Miri, especially tourism-related projects.

Transport Minister Datuk Dr Ling Leong Sik and Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud also addressed the gathering.

Earlier, opening a plywood factory near Sibu, Dr Mahathir criticised several groups in the developing countries which were campaigning for a boycott of Malaysian timber by alleging that felling of trees in this country had affected the global climate.

He said certain Malaysians had conspired with these groups to launch a massive campaign to sabotage the Go-

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vernment's efforts to develop the nation.

The Prime Minister stressed that exporting of timber by Malaysia did not mean it was insensitive to world climatic conditions. The country had always adopted a responsible attitude towards forest conservation.

"Malaysia is a poor country and is just developing. It is important for it to earn a little revenue from its rich forest resources.

"In fact, countries that are so eager to protect the world's cli-

mate should offer good prices for our timber so that we need to export less to get sufficient foreign exchange earnings," he said.

Dr Mahathir said logging in the country was being carried out in a systematic manner and not "haphazardly" as certain quarters were trying to portray.

Earnings

"There are some people who prefer to ignore or plead innocent to the dangers of slash-and-burn cultivation (shifting cultivation) which the Government was trying to dis-

courage because this was mainly responsible for the widespread destruction of Malaysia's tropical forests," he added.

The Prime Minister asked timber companies to give more emphasis to processing of timber for value-added benefits to enhance the country's foreign exchange earnings.

He said Malaysia, as one of the world's largest timber exporters, should venture into more export-oriented wood-based industries, such as products having a distinctive Malaysian style.