

Main aims of going private achieved

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad told the Dewan Negara yesterday it was too early to give a detailed assessment of the Government's privatisation efforts.

However, he added, there were indications that the prime aims of privatisation were being achieved.

"These include the minimising of the Government's financial constraints and the improvement in productivity," he said in reply to Senator Datuk K.S. Nijhar.

Dr Mahathir said the programme had succeeded, on the whole, in reducing the Government's wage obligations.

And, based on reports received by the Government, the productivity of workers in privatised agencies was "exceptionally encouraging," he added.

He said the Government was considering privatisation in several fields, including transport, health, education, energy, posts and construction.

"Several specific projects identified for privatisation include the Malayan Railway, the National Electricity Board and the Penang Port Authority.

"In addition to that, the Government is now conducting studies on a Privatisation Master Plan."

Replying to Senator C. Krishnan, the Prime Minister said some workers initially refused to accept privatisation because they were worried that their jobs might be affected.

"The Kontena Nasional section of Port Klang is the best example where the staff initially rejected privatisation but not long afterwards asked the Government to privatise all port activities," he said.

He said the Government was confident that privatisation would be a prime mover towards economic growth.