

# Cynics in the way of progress

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## Malaysia can join NIC club sooner if not for them: PM

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**IPOH, Fri. — Malaysia can join the ranks of the newly industrialised countries (NICs) sooner than expected but for the "obstacles" placed in its way — and the cynics, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.**

The Prime Minister said with commitment and dedication from the people and Government, the country would be able to join the NIC club possibly "within the next 10 years".

Countries which have achieved NIC status are South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore.

He was referring to a report in the newspapers which said that Malaysia could become an NIC by 1995. The statement was made by Professor Dr Fong Chan Onn, a lecturer in the Economics and Administration Faculty of the University of Malaya, at a seminar yesterday.

### Negative stand

Speaking to reporters after launching the Perak-level Loyalty With The People Movement (Semarak) at Kampung Gajah, 66km from here, Dr Mahathir noted that there was another so-called intellectual who was sceptical about Malaysia's ability to become an NIC.

This person, he said, had expressed the view that Malaysia would not become one, claiming that by the year 2000, the country would have a population of 70 million.

This person was ignorant of the fact that "our aim is to have a population of 70 million by the year 2100".

"We can achieve the (NIC) status if we are united and work hard towards becoming an industrialised nation," Dr Mahathir said.

"What is regrettable is that there are people who always take a negative stand on heavy industrial projects like the national car and cement and steel plants.

"By making disparaging statements, these people were trying to discourage foreign investment."