

PM: IT'S UP TO YOU

TELUK INTAN, Fri. — Malaysia can become a newly-industrialised country (NIC) in the next 10 years only if the people adhered to the Government's development policy, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"The Government is working hard towards achieving the NIC status but this will take a longer time to realise if certain quarters continue to instigate the people against the Government," the Prime Minister said.

He said the quarters were also trying to influence the people with "a negative view" of government plans.

"To them, whatever we do is never right. Because of their actions, I cannot say exactly when we can acquire it (NIC status)," he told reporters after meeting State Barisan Nasional leaders at Pasir Salak near here.

Dr Mahathir said his confidence stemmed from the rapid growth of the manufacturing sector and the interest of foreign investors in locating their industries in Malaysia.

South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore are among

the newly-industrialised countries.

Dr Mahathir was elaborating on his statement at the launching of the *Semarak (Loyalty with the People)* campaign in Perak at Kampung Gajah, about 27km from here, where he said some intellectuals had predicted that Malaysia could be an NIC in six years.

Dr Mahathir said he was disappointed with some people who feel the nation is not capable of becoming an NIC within the period projected on "grounds" that Malaysia would have a population of 70 million by the year 2000.

Such an assumption, he said, was wrong because the Govern-

ment had projected a 70 million population in 112 years or by the year 2100.

He said making negative statements denying the country's capability to become an NIC was as bad as the thinking by some people earlier that Malaysia cannot produce its own car or set up its own steel plant.

To a question on whether Malaysia would lose certain privileges, including financial assistance if it gained NIC status, Dr Mahathir said: "We should be prepared to face such a loss when we become a rich or developed country."

He said any country had a choice of remaining poor or becoming rich and any country that

did not want to progress had no pride.

Dr Mahathir also said the *Semarak* campaign would be continued after the Hari Raya Puasa in all States as it had been very effective in providing an avenue for leaders to meet the people and brief them.

He was impressed with the response to the campaign in Kampung Gajah, the third in the *Semarak* series launched so far. The national-level campaign was launched in Kelantan followed by Perlis recently.

Earlier, at the launching today, Dr Mahathir told the 15,000 crowd the Government had no intention of conducting itself as an "elitist" government where only a small group ruled over a large number of people.

He said the people should not let history repeat itself by becoming embroiled in conflicts because this would retard the country's development.

On democracy, he said the people could use the power of the ballot to reject any leader not loyal to the country or unable to fulfil their aspirations, without any bloodshed or conflict.

He added that the *Semarak* campaign was launched so leaders could get closer to the people, and not just during election seasons.