

# Privatisation will benefit all, says Dr M

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KUANTAN, Sun. — The privatisation of agencies such as the Telecoms Department is not intended to enable the private sector to amass wealth at the expense of consumers, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

There should not be such fears because no one could charge unreasonably without adversely affecting his business, he added.

The Prime Minister said this in a speech to mark the opening of the Kuantan 2A earth satellite station. His speech was read out by Energy, Telecommunications and Posts Minister Datuk Leo Moggie.

Dr Mahathir said he was happy that the privatisation of

the Telecoms Department had not led to an increase in charges.

He noted that Syarikat Telekom Malaysia (STM) Berhad's charges were among the lowest in the world and that its services were as sophisticated as those in developed countries.

He noted that the direct dialling service linked Malaysia to 115 countries and that there were 105,203 consumers with this facility.

"From today, the direct dialling service will be extended to another 50 countries," he said.

He said the success of STM had increased the Government's faith in privatisation.

It was the Government's aim to allow the private sector to play a more significant role in

the development of the economy.

But, he said, privatisation would be carried out only with careful planning and control.

He called on STM to continue to upgrade telecommunication services in the country.

"Success in this field is vital for the industrial and economic development of the country," he said.

"Businessmen will be keen to invest in the country only if the telecommunications sector can provide efficient service."

The construction of the Kuantan earth station by STM was in line with the Government's aspirations as the telecommunications industry was considered a forerunner of the country's industrialisation programme, he added.