

PM explains why curfew was lifted

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — The Government decided to lift the curfew in several security areas as there was no longer any communist movement in the country, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said all the communists had either given up, were arrested or killed by the Armed Forces.

"The situation now is calm ... There are no more clashes in the jungle," he told a Press conference at the Putra World Trade Centre.

However, he said caution must still be exercised in those areas as the communists had left many booby-traps behind.

On the meetings between the police and the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) in Thailand, Dr Mahathir said:

"Actually, we are not negotiating with the CPM. The Thai authorities have met the CPM and have been keeping us informed.

"We are taking part in the talks because it concerns our national security. We will have to wait and see what the outcome of the discussions are."

Meanwhile, *Bernama* reports that the public welcomed the move to withdraw the security area status and curfew along the East-West Highway.

Traders praised the Government for its determined

effort which had resulted in the improved security situation, allowing for more rapid economic development.

They felt that the relaxations, effective Dec 1, would give the people a chance to increase their income and enable the Government to implement more development projects.

At present the highway, linking Jeli in Kelantan with Grik in Perak, is open to traffic from 6am to 6pm only as it is within a security area.

In Kota Baru, the Kelantan branch Malaysia Malay Chamber of Commerce vice-chairman Haji Salam Awang said the Government's move would enhance the opportunities for and income of traders in Kelantan.

Haji Salam, who is also president of the Kelantan branch Malaysian Bumiputera Contractors Association, said projects near the highway could be completed faster as work could be carried out at night and building materials from the west coast could arrive earlier.

Encik Abdullah Hussein, a committee member of the Kelantan Taxi and Hired Car Owners/Drivers Association, said the lifting of the curfew would pave the way for around-the-clock taxi service around the highway area.

At present, only about 10

taxis ply daily between Jeli/Grik and the west coast, including Ipoh, Butterworth and Alor Star.

In Ipoh, the Perak Government also welcomed the Federal Government's move, saying it would speed up development, particularly in Pengkalan Hulu, Grik and Banding.

"The move will enable Government agencies like Felda and the Perak Agriculture Development Corporation to speed up land development projects," State Secretary Datuk Haji Ahmad Saadi said.

He was glad that the Federal Government agreed to lift the curfew in Perak, especially Grik and Banding.

State Works Affairs Committee chairman Ong Ka Chuan said the State Government hoped to speed up the provision of basic amenities in Hulu Perak following the lifting of the curfew.

He said programmes, like road building, had to take into consideration the curfew order, and its lifting would provide for a smoother implementation of projects.

Among other major projects being implemented is a \$10 million road to shorten travelling distance between Ijok in Selama and Sumpitan in Hulu Perak from 200km to 30km. The road is scheduled for completion in two years.