

# Provide quality service, Dr M urges TEN

By Zulkifli Talib

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad launched Tenaga Nasional today with a call to the corporation to provide quality service at reasonable rates.

"This is the hope of the consumers, that the privatisation policy will enable them to enjoy better services than before.

"TEN must ensure that the tariffs levied are stable and will not burden the people and at the same time act as a catalyst in the country's development," he said at the launching at the TEN headquarters in Jalan Bangsar.

With the launch of TEN, the National Electricity Board ceases to exist from today.

At the launch, the company's corporate logo and song were unveiled. Guests were also treated to a slide show on electricity supply in the country which began in 1894.

Among the guests were Energy, Telecommunications and Posts Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Velu, Works Minister Datuk Leo Moggie, Minister in the PM's Department Datuk Dr Yusof Noor, Hu-

man Resources Minister Datuk Lim Ah Lek and representatives from foreign missions and embassies.

Dr Mahathir said that for TEN to be able to provide quality service it would not only require efficient managers but also dedicated workers who were committed to improving their productivity.

He also said that workers' salaries and allowances must also strike a balance with production cost and future investments.

"Not all the profits are to be distributed to the shareholders and workers. Some have to be put in reserve while some have to be invested wisely.

"In short, we not only want privatised government agencies to operate as a commercial body in

terms of providing (more attractive) salaries and allowances but also to practise prudent commercial values," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said that the Government would continue to ensure that the development of the electrical supply industry was of quality and that the tariffs levied on consumers were reasonable.

He said the Government had set up an Electricity Supply Department which would monitor and supervise the industry.

However, he stressed the need for TEN and the department to have a good relationship in the interest of all parties.

The Prime Minister said that when the Government prepared a master plan on the privatisation of its agencies, the NEB was identified as the

most suitable for such a move.

He said this was because it had the potential to expand and progress, and get higher returns if run as a commercial venture.

"The privatisation of NEB will also reduce the burden on the Government in terms of capital needed to finance and maintain other public amenities."

He, however, stressed that the main objective of privatisation was to increase productivity and this would mean increasing output with very little or no increase in production costs.

Dr Mahathir said he hoped the workers in TEN would make the company a success because "the attention of the world, especially foreign investors, would be on the performance of the company."

"And it will be shameful for a privatised government agency to fail and seek government aid or be taken over by the Government in the end."

The Prime Minister also urged TEN to find ways to overcome problems that would affect its performance in the wake of the rising cost of oil triggered

by the Gulf crisis.

"TEN can still survive with the current profit margin but it will have to find ways to overcome any rising problems if the oil prices continue to go up," he said.

At the same time, Dr Mahathir said, TEN would also have to meet a record demand for electricity supply caused by the rapid growth of the economy and industrialisation.

"If the trend continues, TEN will have to make heavy capital investments to meet the higher demand.

"It is expected that TEN will invest \$20 billion until the year 2000," he said.

Dr Mahathir said TEN's future achievements would be made the model in the Government's privatisation policy.

He also said TEN should look into expanding into related services to increase its revenue, like in the case of utility companies in other countries.

Earlier, Datuk Seri Samy Vellu said 96 per cent of the 24,000 NEB workers had submitted their option letter to join TEN before the deadline yesterday.



**TENAGA NASIONAL**