

Perspective plan will liberalise trade further

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THE Government promises to provide greater trade liberalisation in the country's second Outline Perspective Plan (OPP) — a socio-economic plan scheduled to begin this year — and maintain the existing favourable business climate.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said as an initial step, the investment guidelines on 100 per cent foreign equity ownership for manufacturing projects, which expired in 1990, have been extended for another year.

"Our record speaks for itself. Further measures will be announced later together with the release of the second OPP," he told reporters in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

The first OPP coincided with the implementation of the New Economic Policy (NEP) which ended last year. The second OPP, together with the Sixth Malaysia Plan, will be tabled in Parliament at the end of June this year.

"We have not fixed any time frame for the second OPP. There are suggestions for 10-year

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and 20-year periods. There is also a suggestion not to have a time frame," he said.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the second OPP will basically take off from where the first OPP left off and continue to eradicate poverty and narrow the economic gap between the races.

He said the Government has not finalised the outline of the new policy but will take into account the views of the National Economic Consultative Council and the chambers of commerce and industry.

Government agencies and the Economic Planning Unit have also come up with their own plans.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister said, there is no plan for a second meeting with Parti Bersatu Sabah leaders.

"I listened to their proposals on the coalition government. I gave my views. There was no discussion on whether Datuk Pairin Kitingan should step down to pave the way for a coalition government," he said. — *By Azam Aris*