

PM: Shipping must keep pace

PORT KLANG, Tues. — The shipping industry must keep abreast with the country's rapid industrial development so that they can complement each other's development, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Usually the growth in the industrial sector exceeds that of the services sector, the Prime Minister said, adding that efforts must be made to ensure balanced growth in the various sectors.

Unbalanced growth may restrict industrial expansion and weaken the country's investment prospects, particularly exports, Dr Mahathir said at the launching of MISC Haulage Services Sdn Bhd and a ceremony to mark the maiden call of *Bunga Siantan* — the MISC's latest vessel — at the port here.

He added that the Government was aware of the importance of the shipping industry, in view of the rapid industrial development, and had provided various incentives for the industry.

He said sea transportation costs remained stable and the shipping industry must now strive to provide services comparable to that offered by foreign shippers.

The Prime Minister also noted that container traffic in the country had in-

creased rapidly over the years. Business for the three existing container hauliers had also increased, he added.

However, they had not been able to meet all their customer requirements for container haulage even though they had increased their services.

Against this background, the Government had approved an application by the Malaysian International Shipping Corporation to venture into container haulage.

"In considering MISC's application to be the fourth haulier, the Government took into consideration the fact that the company was the largest in the shipping industry and was involved in moving a large quantity of container boxes," he said.

The three other existing container hauliers are Kontena Nasional Sdn Bhd, Shapadu Kontena Sdn Bhd and Konsortium Perkapalan Berhad.

Dr Mahathir added the Government would monitor the performance of the four hauliers, adding that it would issue container haulier licences to other interested parties if the existing companies could not meet the demands of the shipping industry or if their performance was not satisfactory.