

Federal Government sincere, says Dr M

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KOTA BARU, Thurs. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today called on the Kelantan people to accept development brought to them by the Federal Government as these are sincere efforts to improve their lot.

He said the Federal Government would continue to develop Kelantan as it had done in the past.

Speaking at the opening of the \$19 million Pasir Mas-Salor bridge, about 13km from here, the Prime Minister said the project was yet another proof of such effort.

Present at the colourful ceremony was the Menteri Besar of Kelantan, Haji Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat. Also present were Works Minister Datuk Leo Moggie, Youth and Sports Minister Senator Haji Annuar Musa and Deputy Works Minister Kerk Choo Ting.

In a jovial mood, the Prime Minister said: "I hope

nobody would try to swim across the river just because they do not want to use the bridge built by the Federal Government."

The large crowd made up of Barisan Nasional and Pas supporters broke into laughter.

The new 630-metre bridge connects Kota Baru with Pasir Mas and Rantau Panjang.

The crowd had obviously anticipated the Prime Minister to make reference to the relations between the Federal Government and the Pas-led State Government, but Dr Mahathir chose instead to take a soothing and sometimes philosophical approach.

However, that did not stop the audience from making their own interpretation on his hour-long speech as was evidenced by the frequent applause and laughter.

State Umno leaders com-

menting on the event, said the audience from both parties had expected the Prime Minister to make strong remarks.

The Prime Minister said that whatever the Federal Government was doing in terms of development could not be construed as anti-Islam because it had always been committed towards bringing development to the poor.

He said the Barisan Nasional Government believed in creating as many wealthy people as possible so that they could be taxed to help fund development projects meant for the poor.

The BN Government, said the Prime Minister, felt that it was its responsibility to take the lead in helping the poor so that they could free themselves from poverty.

Dr Mahathir said he was

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PM gets traditional welcome

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personally committed to long-term planning of the country's development, even though he might not live to see Malaysia attain the status of a developed nation by year 2020.

"We cannot think of only today if we want to progress. We have to plan and execute projects which we had not dreamed we could do," he said.

Dr Mahathir arrived at the bridge to a traditional Kelantan reception.

The drizzle did not dampen the spirit of the people who converged at the bridge as early as 8am to witness the ceremony.

Thirty minutes before Dr Mahathir was scheduled to arrive, the road leading to the bridge was already congested. Dr Mahathir landed at the Sultan Ismail Petra airport about 9.15am and arrived at the bridge at 10.15am.