

PM: More effort to eliminate poverty

GREATER attention will be given to eradicating hardcore poverty.

The hardcore poor currently accounted for four per cent of households, and the target was to reduce this to two per cent by 1995, the Prime Minister said.

Relative poverty would be tackled by increasing the access of the lower income groups to social services and by creating opportunities for them to improve their income and to go into modern and higher-paying economic activities. Datuk Seri Dr

Mahathir Mohamad said.

By the end of the 6th Plan period in 1995, the overall incidence of poverty would have been reduced to 11 per cent, from 17.1 per cent last year.

He said more emphasis would be placed on improving the delivery system through proper targeting of programmes to reach the beneficiaries.

The strategies for the eradication of poverty and restructuring of society would take into account the progress made and the weaknesses experienced in implementat-

ing the NEP, he said.

Dr Mahathir said more focus would be placed on improving the quality of achievements rather than merely on quantity, especially in efforts to restructure society, so that a stronger foundation could be laid for the bumiputras to participate more effectively and permanently in the business, commercial and industrial activities.

He said the aim of increasing bumiputra corporate equity would continue to be pursued.

Existing gains would be

strengthened and made more meaningful by increasing the capability of the bumiputras not only to own but to manage assets in a productive manner, he said.

Dr Mahathir said the private sector was expected to play an important role towards creating a pool of bumiputra managers and entrepreneurs.

"The bumiputras, for their part, must be prepared to undergo training and to be disciplined and patient. They must accept that there is no easy way to succeed."