

# Have patience, Dr M advises Johor folk

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JOHOR BARU, Fri. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad advised Johoreans to be patient when facing difficulties due to the rapid development in the State and also having to compete with Singaporeans.

The Prime Minister said the Government was aware of the plight of the people, especially the civil servants and lower-income group, who were affected by the high cost of living and traffic congestion.

The Government would do its best to resolve these problems, he added.

Dr Mahathir said he sympathised with these people but felt the problems were unavoidable because of the rapid development in the State and its proximity to Singapore.

"But I think it is better to have problems related to success than failure," he told about 2,000 people at a dinner hosted by the State Government at the Menteri Besar's residence last night.

He said many States envied Johor's success "which the people of Johor should be proud of."

Among those present were Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, Menteri Besar Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat, Deputy Finance Minister Abdul Ghani Othman, State Exco members and leaders of the State Barisan Nasional component parties.

Dr Mahathir said Johor should continue its development programmes which were fruitful in wooing foreign investors.

On Muhyiddin's suggestion that the Government speed up and increase allocations for development programmes in the State, he said the matter would be considered.

Muhyiddin, in his speech

earlier, urged the Federal Government to give more money so that Johor could improve the Sultan Ismail Airport in Senai, Johor Port in Pasir Gudang and major roads here.

He said these facilities were vital to enable Johor to continue its physical and economic development programmes to attract investors.

Muhyiddin said the airport and port would benefit the State and the country as they would complement the Kuala Lumpur International Airport and Port Klang which were congested.

Dr Mahathir acknowledged the need for such projects, saying the Federal Government was unable to entertain all requests from Johor because of financial constraints.

"We will try our best to develop the country but we will not burden ourselves with debts unnecessarily.

"There is no point to develop the country while at the same time be burdened with huge debts," he added.

Dr Mahathir said the Government would continue with its privatisation policy as it had proven to be a success in maintaining the country's economic growth without taxing the Government financially.

He said it would continue to woo foreign investors as it was the best way to ensure progress, besides creating more jobs.

Dr Mahathir reiterated his call to Malaysians working abroad to return and help the country which was moving rapidly towards high technology-based industries. He said Malaysia had to rely on foreigners because many locals who had the expertise preferred to work abroad.

He urged locals, especially the Malays, to strive harder to ensure the Government's Vision 2020 objectives succeeded.