

# Industrial corridor marks new era for east coast

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad's visit to Kuantan last Thursday signalled the beginning of a new era to the east coast states — the creation of the eastern industrial corridor.

Dr Mahathir was especially interested with the development efforts in Pahang, the largest state in Peninsular Malaysia which sits at the centre of the proposed industrial corridor covering the states of Kelantan, Terengganu, Pahang and part of Johor.

Pahang's development is important towards the setting up of the corridor be-

cause the Kuantan Port stands out as a leading candidate for a distribution centre.

The deepwater port can accommodate large ships of up to 200,000 tonnes which other ports such as Malaysia's premier Port Klang is unable to.

There is also an abundance of raw materials in the state.

With the setting up of the corridor and the necessary infrastructure facilities, it is envisaged that investors can help turn the eastern corridor into Asia's next industrial and investment destination.

The Pahang Government has lined out various strate-

gies to make the state one of the more active commercial centres within the corridor. It has come up with an indicative plan which contains the various industrial development programmes up to the year 2000.

Under the plan, the present 1,023.2 ha land reserved for industrial activities will be increased by another 2,311.6 ha, to be developed by 1995.

Another 16 ha will be provided in the vicinity of the Kuantan Port in Gebeng for those seeking to set up furniture-based industries.

The Government will also guarantee regular supply of timber to these investors for a period of 15 years.

The Government has taken various steps to upgrade the infrastructure facilities including transportation modes, housing schemes and recreational activities for industrial workers.

Industrial estates in Bentong, Peramu and Gebeng are given priority for immediate development efforts in order to ensure that these estates can compete with those in the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia.

The State Government is now giving added emphasis to the development of areas such as Muadzam Shah, Rompin, Maran-Jengka and Mentakab-Temerloh where previous emphasis have been on agriculture develop-

ment.

Under a proposed 10-year plan to upgrade the tourism sector which is aimed at attracting more foreign investment, the State Government will fully exploit the potentials of islands, beaches, lakes, hills, and forests.

Intensive programmes have been implemented to ensure that all tourist attractions are upgraded and ready by the Visit Malaysia Year in 1994.

By 1994, another 14 hotels with 4,764 rooms will be built costing about \$1.3 billion.

Some 1.7 million tourists are expected to visit the state bringing some \$660 million in revenues.