

# CHARGES DELAY POWER PROJECTS

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Personality clashes and accusations of fraud against some government departments are to blame for the power crisis, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said because of this, government projects to upgrade basic infrastructure facilities, particularly power supply, were delayed.

The situation was compounded by allega-

tions from certain quarters that the Government had vested interests in the privatisation of electricity supply, he added.

Dr Mahathir said some government officers were accused of being dictators while others were said to have vested interests in awarding government projects.

"It is not because we are not getting information on the need to upgrade the infrastructure but it seems there is just too much argument going on to get the projects started," he added yesterday.

He was speaking after the inaugural meet-

ing of the industrialists' steering group (see Page 2). The meeting was hit by two power cuts about 15 minutes apart, each lasting more than a minute.

Dr Mahathir said the Government was aware of the weaknesses in the infrastructure since 1990 when foreign investments soared to RM40 billion.

"I will not accept it if we say we are not aware of the needs for infrastructure expansion but so many things have happened to the extent we are not implementing what is necessary."

Dr Mahathir said the Government was prepared to be flexible in its policies to enable the private sector to take part in some development projects due to financial constraints.

For example, he added the 70 per cent Government-owned Tenaga Nasional could ill-afford to carry out projects such as setting up new power stations. Therefore, such projects must be given to the private sector.

"But when this is done, accusations are hurled at the Government and the projects are delayed," he said.