

Help fight inflation, PM tells privatised ag

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KUALA LUMPUR: Privatised agencies, especially utility bodies, have been told not to raise service charges indiscreetly as this would fuel inflation.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad described such attempts for profits as short-sighted because

there would be no net primary gain in the long run.

The Prime Minister said privatised agencies had the social responsibility to help the Government fight inflation.

"We want to keep the inflation rate as low as possible to maintain Malaysia as a low cost country," he said in reply during a dialogue at a privatisation seminar.

Dr Mahathir said he saw no reason why the country should not aim for zero inflation.

"What is the point of having the highest per capita income if we cannot have strong purchasing power," he added.

He said privatised bodies should monitor the infrastructure requirements

in line with the growing economy.

"In 1980, the country received US\$40 billion foreign investments, but realised too late that we should have spent about 10 per cent to upgrade infrastructure.

"That is why we are now short of electricity and water supplies, roads incomplete and ports un-

able to cope with car traffic," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said the Government was vying to privatise its agencies, saying companies should submit proposals.

"However, some fear that if they submit original proposal, somebody will steal it. This is not true as any company submitting an original