

Progress by 2020 if all strive to achieve objective

JOHOR BARU, Mon. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today expressed confidence that Malaysia would become a developed country by 2020 provided everyone — from State Governments down to individuals — strive towards this end.

The Prime Minister said the Government had paved the way and set the direction. What was important now was for everyone to step up efforts towards achieving the goal.

He called on the people to ask themselves the extent of contribution they could give to make Vision 2020 a reality.

"It is good if they have contributed satisfactorily, but if they feel they have not done enough, they should start playing a more effective role," he said when launching the *Assimilation of Vision 2020: Johor Perspective* at the indoor stadium in Jalan Tebrau.

Dr Mahathir said it was possible to achieve the objective of Vision 2020 provided everyone was aware of his responsibility and worked hard for it.

"We must also educate adolescents and schoolchildren on this responsibility as they are the ones who will inherit the country," he said.

He expressed happiness that State Governments, except for Kelantan and Sabah which are under the opposition, were working relentlessly towards achieving the objective of Vision 2020.

"With such a good working relationship between the Federal and State Governments, I am confident we can implement projects that will help us achieve the objective of Vision 2020," the Prime Minister said.

Also present were Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, Menteri Besar Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, executive councillors, department heads and members of voluntary organisations.

Dr Mahathir praised Johor for being the first to organise such a function as well as its other efforts towards making Malaysia a developed country. He hoped that other States would emulate it.

"The Federal Government will give its full cooperation towards such efforts," he added.

Dr Mahathir said the Government was determined to make Malaysia a developed country as it did not want to be left out.

The Prime Minister also said that Malaysians could be proud as they did not have to bow to anyone and could speak their mind on any issue.

Dr Mahathir said it was important for a country to defend its honour as without it independence would become meaningless.

He said the people should not ape the developed countries blindly as not everything they did was exemplary.

"Their economy, morals, behaviour and achievements have all declined. They cannot compete with newly-developing countries. They do ugly things because they do not uphold the teachings of their religions," he said.

On the other hand, Malaysia, while working towards becoming a developed country, was determined to uphold discipline, high moral values and religious beliefs.

"We also want to be able to compete in the interna-

tional market," he said, adding that this was done by upgrading the manufacturing and other sectors.

"By doing this, we can become stronger and richer, which (in turn) can be utilised to protect ourselves and help those who are weak," he said.

Citing Bosnia-Herzegovina as an example, he said that Malaysia now could not do much to help the country from the attacks of the Serbs.

"Of course, we can send our soldiers, but we cannot defend them directly as we are not a big power. Our requests are not entertained," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the people now realised that there was nothing extraordinary about the West.

"We can do it (achieve greater success). The important thing is that we must concentrate on what we do," he said, adding that Malaysia had been able to produce experts in various fields and was able to produce much.

He said, for example, there were many giant companies which made huge profits. "In the West, their companies are big, but their losses are also big," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that Malaysia, as a result of the people's realisation of their responsibility, had also proven its capability to improve its economy even during the recession.

He said countries did not develop during recession because they had lost their awareness and had neither the vision nor the sense of direction.

The three-day exhibition on various development projects in Johor began yesterday.