

HEAVY PRICE IF PLAN FAILS

12 OCT 1993

By HARPAJAN SINGH

(P)

JOHOR BARU: Malaysians will pay a heavy price if the Government's plan for high economic growth fails, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad warned yesterday.

The people would find themselves coming under immense pressure from developed countries which had the capability to block the nation's growth, the Prime Minister said.

"If we stop moving forward, they (the developed nations) can restrict our growth and push us behind to the extent that we will become a society suppressed by certain groups.

"Even now, there are many independent countries which have to seek assistance and aid from developed nations because their progress is slow.

"The developed countries extend their assistance but at the same time take advantage to dictate terms to the poor nations.

"This is why the Government decided that we must become a developed nation by the year 2020 so that we will not have to bow to anyone and can stand our own ground," he said in launching the *Assimilation of Vision 2020: The Johor Perspective* programme (see Page 2).

Dr Mahathir said the country would gain greater international respect as a developed nation. The country's views were not widely-respected now because it was still a developing nation, he added.

Citing the country's stand on the Bosnian issue, he said although it had sent troops to help, it could not do much more to stop the atrocities of the Serbs "as we are not a big power."

He urged all races to unite in striving to achieve the objectives of Vision 2020, saying: "The developed society we are striving to mould must be one that is progressive, efficient, skilled, educated and at the same time hold high morals and religious values, unlike those in the West.

"Some western developed societies are deteriorating because they have lost religious and moral values and the people have lost direction and adopted unhealthy trends and habits.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysians must remain a responsible society with strong religious beliefs, adding that it was the duty of parents to educate children on these values.