

PM: Competition good for industry

ALOR STAR: Small companies will not be able to contribute much towards the development of the telecommunications industry in Malaysia, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

The Prime Minister said only those with strong financial backing and excellent workforce would be able to bring about better quality service for telecommunications technology.

Speaking when laying the foundation stone for the Telekom Tower here yesterday, Dr Mahathir also said it was important for the industry to have "healthy competition" between the giant companies.

"Only this will bring about benefits to the people," he said.

He urged these giant telecommunications com-

panies to have a common aim if they wanted the nation to develop further in this field and be at par with other industrial nations.

"The expansion of the telecommunications network in the country must be equally shared to ensure that the nation would not be left behind in terms of a more developed and sophisticated technology," he added.

He said competition among companies should not give rise to enmity, a process which often resulted in unnecessary wastage of funds and further weakening of the companies.

"Competition will be beneficial if it can spur the companies to produce greater efficiency and improve quality and fair pricing," he added.

He said healthy rivalry was the impetus for better management and to establish a specialisation process especially in overcoming problems efficiently.

Dr Mahathir said once such a stage was achieved, it would not be impossible for the industry to establish a "zero problem towards perfection."

He said the nation's economic development process was not aimed towards building a country which had excellent economic growth alone but also a nation which enjoyed total development.

"Such development will bring about quality life for the *rakyat* and this is the main thrust of our Vision 2020," he added.

He said that the development in telecommunication technology must

also be made available in rural areas.

"This process will enable those in the rural areas to enjoy the same facilities."

He said the National Telecommunication Policy was aimed at ensuring that the usage of technology was at its maximum and at par with other developed countries.

Also present were Telekom Malaysia executive chairman Tan Sri Rashdan Baba, Agriculture Minister Datuk Seri Sanusi Junid and Kedah Menteri Besar Tan Sri Osman Aroff and state excos.

Dr Mahathir later inserted a copy of his speech, a pen, yesterday's newspaper, and pictures into a time capsule which would be entombed in the foundation stone of the 41-storey tower.