

# Dr M: Sabah's cost of living can be lowered

**By Joseph Bingkasan**

KOTA KINABALU, Tues. — The cost of living in Sabah should not be higher than in Peninsular Malaysia, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said one of the factors which contributed to this was the high cost of transportation of goods into Sabah from the peninsula.

He said there was a need to study the transportation system between Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah.

"I am confident that the cost of living in Sabah can also be lowered by efficient control of prices of goods," he said after launching the Kota Kinabalu Industrial Park (KKIP) at Kampung Melawa in Telipok, 25km from here, this afternoon.

Dr Mahathir said there must be reasons for the high cost of living in Sabah, and should the transportation system be among them,

than it was only appropriate to review the system.

He said when prices of goods increased, there must be reasonable reasons for it.

He said it was believed that the cost of goods was higher in Sabah as the cost of transportation was added to the value of the goods when sold to consumers.

"We (Government) must find ways to overcome this problem ... must find ways to lower the present cost of living in Sabah."

He said in the Government effort to solve the problem, the people must also play their role in order to get the benefit of getting their money's worth.

"We must discipline ourselves ... what is important is the purchasing power of your income not the amount of your income."

He said it would not benefit the people if their income increased or they acquired extra money when the prices of goods also in-

creased.

He said unemployment in Sabah at seven per cent was also still high compared with the country's two per cent.

He said the two per cent actually indicated zero unemployment in the country.

Dr Mahathir said the two per cent were those who were not willing to work or too selective of jobs.

"And the seven per cent unemployment in Sabah indicates that there exists manpower in Sabah who are still seeking employment."

He said it was for this reason that the Government was doing its best to create employment opportunities in the State by establishing industrial projects.

He said apart from solving the high cost of living and unemployment problems, the Government also wanted to see the industrial sector produce goods for export.

"And the raw materials,

expertise and component of the goods for export must be available in Malaysia and not imported from other countries," he said.

Dr Mahathir said for Sabah to get favourable foreign exchange, components of the goods for export must be made locally.

He said revenue would not be much if goods are imported and added value here before being exported.

He hoped that goods manufactured by investors in the KKIP would not be imported.

After the launching, the Prime Minister witnessed the signing of six memorandums of understanding between KKIP Sdn Bhd and investors for the setting up of various industries in the industrial park.

KKIP Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of the Sabah Economic Development Corporation, is the developer of the zone which is part of the 3,200-hectare industrial park.