

PM: Perlis should emulate Singapore

By
A. Rahman Osman

KANGAR, Mon. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today urged Perlis to emulate economically-dynamic Singapore which possesses a trading sector almost double that of Malaysia despite a size similar to the State.

He said Perlis had achieved a lot despite being a small State and it had the capability to attain more success.

"It goes to show that size is immaterial. A small State can realise its ambitions and aspirations no matter how high they are," he said at a lunch with State Barisan Nasional leaders at the Pens Travelodge Kangar.

"The crucial factors are the capabilities of the people and that of the leadership. Much can be achieved if both work in tandem and with discipline," he added.

Present among the 500-

strong crowd were State Barisan Nasional chief Tan Sri Dr Abdul Hamid Pawanteh, Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim, executive councillors and elected representatives.

Dr Mahathir commended Perlis for its current ability to produce people of calibre at national level.

They included Kuala Lumpur Datuk Bandar Datuk Mazlan Ahmad, the Standards and Industrial Research Institute of Malaysia (Sirim) director-general Tan Sri Kamaruzzaman Shariff and successful people in the corporate sector such as Renong chief Tan Sri Halim Saad.

He added many companies that had originated from the State, such as Perlis Plantations, had also expanded to acquire other firms across the country.

Dr Mahathir said an improved road system linking the State with Kepala Batas airport in Alor Star and the

Penang Port would boost its economic expansion.

He also said the Federal Government had decided that Perlis should have an airport for light aircraft by next year.

"It will expand on a gradual basis subject to prevailing needs. It may eventually accommodate the wide-bodied Boeing 747."

He later told reporters that the Federal approval was given following a proposal submitted by the State Government.

Dr Mahathir commended Dr Hamid for initiating many economic changes during his stint as a two-term Menteri Besar.

He said Perlis was really backward when he came to work for a month in 1956.

"I was staying for two weeks at the government rest house and was asked to vacate the room because a VIP was checking in. As there were no other hotels, I had to stay with a friend.

"The situation is different now. The highway linking Kangar and Arau is lined with trees and embellished by beautiful buildings."

The Prime Minister expressed confidence that the succeeding leadership would continue Dr Hamid's good work.

"I believe the Perlis Government will work hard along with other BN State governments to help transform Malaysia into a respected nation," he said.

This determination to raise the country's status has become the resolve of the BN government, he said.

Dr Mahathir noted that this was his first visit to Perlis since the general election seven months ago.

While commending the BN for repeating a clean sweep of the State, he reminded elected representatives that the mandate to rule meant that they had to work doubly hard to deliver the goods.