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Governments 'can stunt growth'

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IPOH, Thurs. - Governments are the greatest obstacles to development, obstructing the progress of many countries, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

"Many countries are unable to develop because their leaders are concerned more about their political survival.

"They quarrel among themselves to show who has more power," Dr Mahathir said.

To reflect that one possessed power, one must always object, he said.

"Thus, you must place obstacles on the path of others. So governments, whether it is the politicians or civil servants, are the greatest obstacles," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who is on a one-day visit to Perak, was responding to a question on whether he saw any weaknesses in the development of Perak.

The Prime Minister said he could not see any real weakness that could not be overcome, adding that it all depended on the attitude of the Government.

"I believe that governments are the greatest obstacles to the progress of many countries," he told reporters at the Safire Pharmaceuticals Sdn Bhd factory in Seri Iskandar before winding up his day-long visit to the State.

Also present was Menteri Besar Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib.

Dr Mahathir said although this did not happen in Malaysia, State Governments should take heed and look into ways of overcoming these obstacles.

Elaborating on the attitude of leaders of some countries, Dr Mahathir said their efforts were often misdirected - one directed basically for their political needs.

"If they want to be a leader, they have to demand much more than others so that they can become one," he said. "Because of this, many countries cannot be developed."

Dr Mahathir said it was fortunate that Malaysia had Malaysia Inc. where the tripartite components of the Government, trade unions and private sector worked together.

Satisfied that Perak had diversified its development programmes and activities, he said the State could develop mining land into beautiful golf courses.

Perak, he said, was also endowed with numerous natural attractions like a hot spring which if found in Europe, Korea or Japan, would have been optimised.

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