

Development projects 57 ***a necessity, says PM*** 5 2 8 '78

KUCHING: The Government must make efforts to continuously undertake projects to sustain development if it wants to be re-elected, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

The Prime Minister said all development projects were not a waste of money but a necessity as they were carried out for the benefit of the people.

Citing the now deferred Bakun dam project in the Belaga district as an example, he said its implementation would enable the country to derive the cheapest means of energy

for its development.

He said the construction of highways and airports was to provide facilities for the people as these utilities were not for show.

"If we want to waste money, we can erect statues of all our leaders," added Dr Mahathir during the opening ceremony for the RM150mil Sarawak barrage and ship lock project in Sejingkat near here yesterday.

He said the Government had to spend extra money on some infrastructure projects, like

airport terminal buildings and bridges, to benefit tourism.

On the environment, Dr Mahathir said accusations that Malaysia had cut down all the trees were not true as it had always been careful in clearing land for development projects.

He said unlike some countries which practised clear felling until not a single tree was left, Malaysia had cared for the welfare of animals during land clearing.

Advising the people to look after the environ-

ment and nature, he said rivers were the gifts of God which should be treated.

Dr Mahathir was disappointed that many Malaysians used rivers as dumping ground for rubbish.

"The gift of water is the essence of life. This gift of God is not given to many people like those in the desert. Some countries are begging for fresh water.

"We are progressive and much more civilised now, so we should value what we have and look af-

ter what we have."

He noted that the Sarawak barrage project had helped to improve the water quality of the Sarawak River, which provides the drinking water for residents here.

He was later briefed on the barrage project by PPES Works (Sarawak) Sdn Bhd managing director Peter Wong and witnessed the operation of the ship lock and the passage of patrol boats through it.

PPES Works was the project's turnkey contractor.