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Country's progress due to rakyat's support: PM

MALAYSIA is today one of the most developed countries in the Third World because the Government enjoys strong support from the rakyat which allows it to run the country smoothly, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad says.

The country's progress has impressed heads of government who had visited the country and see for themselves Malaysia's achievements, he said.

Similarly, other visitors and tourists find that Malaysia is already a developed country while foreign workers are grateful to be working here, Dr Mahathir said.

The Prime Minister was speaking to about 1,000 taxi drivers in Putrajaya when launching the "Syabas Malaysia" car stickers for taxis, rental cars and limousines.

All Malaysians have benefited and will continue to benefit from the rapid development of the country as their interests always come first when the Government draws up and implement national development policies, he said.

On their part, the people should help preserve peace and sustain Malaysia's progress.

"If not us, who will preserve peace in our country, love our country, develop our country, protect our country and preserve national independence?"

If not for the rakyat's strong support and spirit of patriotism, Malaysia would not have been able to pursue its own economic recovery measures without the influence of outsiders, Dr Mahathir said.

"This should make us feel fortunate and grateful as our country continues to stay 100 per cent independent. No one can order us around, control us... we are able to tailor our nation-building efforts according to our needs."

Whether they are taxi drivers or big entrepreneurs, all Malaysians contribute to and benefit from the country's policies and development. The tourism industry is a key revenue earner for the country and taxi drivers play an important role in its development.

On its part, the Government has been constantly wooing foreign visitors, including spending about RM150 million a year in various tourism-related programmes, he said.

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