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`Inform Mida of extra conditions'

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STATE Governments are urged to submit whatever additional conditions they may impose on investors to the Malaysian Industrial Development Authority so that it could then convey them to potential investors.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the States should let investors know beforehand of all the conditions needed to have their projects approved.

He said there had been cases where investors discovered to their frustration that they had to also comply with additional conditions despite already getting the approval from Mida.

"Some of the investors even decided to shelve their projects upon learning about the additional conditions," he said at a Press conference after opening the Kedah Trade Centre at UBN Tower in Jalan Sultan Ismail in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Also present at the event were Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain and several State Executive Councillors, Members of Parliament and Assemblymen from Kedah.

Dr Mahathir also attributed the additional conditions as one of the main factors for the delay in getting approval for project applications and also in the implementation of those projects.

He said there were even cases where projects were not implemented four or five years after getting the approval from Mida because of those additional conditions.

To avoid a repeat, Dr Mahathir urged all State Executive Councillors to give their approval immediately after deliberating on project applications unless there were concrete reasons against them doing so.

He cited cases where plans to build a five-star hotel in Alor Star and a port in Pulau Banting in Kedah were abandoned because of the additional conditions imposed by the State Government.

"We do not want a repeat of this and we do not want any delay in approving project applications as this can hamper development," he said.

He added that he had also reminded several State Governments about this times and again but none heeded his suggestion even though he was the Prime Minister.

Earlier, in his speech, Dr Mahathir reminded all ministries to spend their allocations the same year the fundings were given.

Despite constant reminders, he said some ministries were slow in utilising the allocations.

"Some of them are not efficient and do not know how to use the sum allocated to them," he said.

On why Kedah was one of the poorest States in the country and lagging behind others in terms of development, Dr Mahathir said this showed that he did not practise favouritism in channelling funds to Kedah.

"Unlike Selangor or Johor, Kedah also lacks major infrastructure to attract more investors to the State," he said.

However, he said whatever problems or shortage of infrastructure that Kedah had could be rectified provided the State Government was prepared and willing to make it easier for investors to implement their projects in the State.

On the Kedah Trade Centre, Dr Mahathir said he hoped the facility would help to bring more investors and investments to Kedah and realise its aim of becoming a fully developed State by the year 2010.

Meanwhile, Syed Razak said the trade centre would serve as a one-stop place for investors wishing to invest in the State.

"They can come here to make enquiries and to look for investment opportunities in the State and also to seek approvals for their project applications without having to go to Kedah," he said.

In his speech, Syed Razak also urged politicians in Kedah to put aside whatever disputes that they might have and concentrate their efforts instead on how to bring further development to the State.

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