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Promote Sabah as the gateway to BIMP-EAGA region, says Dr M

KOTA KINABALU, Mon. - The eastern corridor covering States such as Sabah, Sarawak and Terengganu has remained as the lesser developed region of the country.

That is why over the years the Government has provided special incentives to accelerate the corridor's development.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said this in his message in the souvenir programme for the four-day Sabah International Expo 2000 held at the Sutera Harbour Resort which ended today.

Some 370 people representing 25 countries participated in the expo organised by the Federation of Sabah Manufacturers and the Sabah branch of the Malaysian International Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The Prime Minister added that one of the reasons for Sabah's slower economic take-off was the relative lack of foreign investment.

"I am happy to note the extensive business opportunities to be explored which hopefully will lead to greater trade and investment links," he said.

He added the organisers were right in focusing these business opportunities on the Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and Philippines (BIMP)-East Asean Growth Area (EAGA) region simply because of geographical proximity and the large population base.

Indeed, Dr Mahathir said, Sabah should be promoted as a gateway to BIMP-EAGA in finance, trade, tourism and manufacturing.

Furthermore, he said, together with the State's scenic environment and the many world-class hotels, there was vast potential to turn Sabah into the East Asian centre for conventions and exhibitions.

He said the expo was an important step towards galvanising stronger growth for Malaysia and it was also a commendable private sector effort.

"The Government's development efforts would reach greater height when well supported by private sector response and initiative," he said.

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