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Promote State as BIMP-EAGA gateway

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Sabah, with its now well-developed physical infrastructure, should be promoted as a gateway to BIMP-EAGA in finance, trade, tourism and manufacturing.

BIMP-EAGA is the acronym for Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines-East Asean Growth Area which covers southern Philippines, Kalimantan, East Malaysia and Brunei.

One of the reasons for Sabah's slower economic take-off was the relative lack of foreign investment.

Dr Mahathir said this in a message contained in the Sabah International Expo 2000 (SIE 2000) souvenir programme.

The four-day SIE 2000 held in Kota Kinabalu was launched yesterday by Deputy Chief Minister and Industrial Development Minister Datuk Tham Nyip Shen.

Dr Mahathir said foreign investment, especially in the manufacturing sector, was critical in the nation's industrial growth.

He added that the country's industrial growth was very fast in the last 30 years as seen in Penang, Selangor and Johor.

Recognising that the Eastern Corridor covering Sabah, Sarawak and Terengganu had remained as the lesser developed region in Malaysia, he said over the years the Government had provided special incentives to accelerate the corridor's development.

The four-day SIE 2000 attracted 120 exhibitors from Australia, Philippines, Indonesia, India, New Zealand, Canada, Germany, Russia, France, United Kingdom, South Africa, China, Taiwan and Japan.

A business conference would be held at the end of the SIE 2000.

The conference is expected to be attended by 350 potential investors.

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