

19 MAY 2001

Mahathir-Johor

JOHOR CAN ACHIEVE DEVELOPED STATE STATUS BEFORE 2020 - MAHATHIR

JOHOR BAHRU, May 19 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is confident that Johor will achieve developed state status earlier than the targeted year of 2020 if the people continued to support the state government and the Barisan Nasional.

"We want Johor to become a developed state earlier than 2020, perhaps by 2005," said the Prime Minister.

He said the development in Johor was more rapid than in other states partly due to its proximity to Singapore.

"However, if the government is not efficient and does not receive support from the people, the state will probably not be able to progress," he said when addressing 2,000 politicians, community leaders, government servants and private sector representatives at Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman's official residence here.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysians were fortunate as the various communities could still get along well and understand each other's culture and languages.

The close ties among the people had helped the country recover faster from the recent regional economic slowdown compared to some neighbouring countries, said the Prime Minister.

There were no racial riots in Malaysia during the slowdown unlike in those countries, he said.

"I am confident that if the various races continued to get along well with one another, the country would become more stable and we can overcome all our problems easily," he added.

-- BERNAMA

RAM MNY SK