

'Political strength brings progress'

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MIRI: A convincing political victory and strong links between the state and the Federal Government will ensure economic progress, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

"In Sarawak, the government won all the seats except one. That is why Sarawak has such a strong and credible government.

"There is no need to waste time and attention on useless politicking.

"Instead, they can focus their energy on development and progress and this has evidently brought a lot of benefit to the people in Sarawak," he said, adding that Sarawak was one of the richest states in the country.

Dr Mahathir said a political party must have a convincing victory to form a credible and solid government.

"We cannot have a credible government if it only wins by one seat. That government will live in fear, always worried if its members will switch to the opposition," he told some 10,000 people when opening the new RM210mil terminal building of the Miri Airport and extended runway yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said he was pleasantly surprised to note Miri's rapid growth.

"Miri has so many hotels, including five-star ones. The town is booming and there has been an increase in tourist arrivals. Miri's pace of growth is reflective of the situation in Sarawak and Malaysia," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Sarawak had

emerged as the state with the most number of international-standard airports.

He said last year, he opened the RM280mil Bintulu Airport, yesterday the one in Miri, and soon Kuching International Airport would be expanded.

Transport Minister Datuk Chan Kong Choy, in his address, said the new Miri Airport would propel the region to greater social and economic progress.

Miri would serve as the main entry

point to northern Sarawak and also as the centre for the rural air services in the state, he said.

Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud said the state was grateful to Dr Mahathir and the Federal Government for their concern and efforts to develop Sarawak.

He said Sarawak would cherish and always welcome the presence and assistance of Dr Mahathir even when he was no longer Prime Minister.