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## Dr M: Malaysia can achieve 4.5% growth

THE government's forecast of 4.5% economic growth for the year is achievable despite the recent SARS outbreak in the region, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He also said that gross domestic product (GDP) growth for the second quarter should be better than the first, "but not as good as anticipated".

"We had anticipated the war in Iraq but not SARS," said Dr Mahathir, who is also Finance Minister.

The Prime Minister made the comments at a press conference in Putrajaya yesterday after witnessing the signing of a contract between the government and Cerbang Perdana Sdn Bhd for the construction of bridge and rail links, as well as related works, for the Gerbang Perdana Bersepadu or Integrated Southern Gateway project.

Located in Bukit Chagar, Johor, the project involves the construction of a new customs, immigration and quarantine complex, the Johor Baru Sentral Terminal, a road and a rail bridge, and a three-tier interchange.

On funding for the 100% Malaysian project, Dr Mahathir said there was enough money in the system, but if necessary the government would issue ringgit-denominated bonds.