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Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad (left) talking with Yayasan Sime Darby chairman Tun Musa Hitam at the launch of the Nadi-Yayasan Sime Darby On-Wheels campaign in Hulu Langat, Selangor, yesterday. — NST picture by Mohd Yusni Ariffin

Dr M: 7.2pc growth reflects nation's progress

HULU LANGAT: Malaysia's 7.2 per cent growth last year was an indicator of the nation's progress, said former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said the percentage increase, the country's fastest growth rate since 2000, exceeded the six per cent annual growth target needed to propel Malaysia towards achieving developed nation status.

"If we can sustain the growth annually, we will be well on our way

towards achieving Vision 2020," he said in Kampung Kuala Pangsun here yesterday.

He said the growth compared well with other developed nations, which averaged only three to four per cent annual growth. This disproved Parti Keadilan Rakyat de facto leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's contention that Malaysia was losing its competitiveness to Singapore and Indonesia, he added.

"You can't compare us to Singa-

pore, where large casinos and gambling have become the drivers of growth," he said at the launch of the Nadi-Yayasan Sime Darby On-Wheels campaign to spread diabetes awareness in rural communities.

The 18-month campaign, jointly organised by Yayasan Sime Darby and National Diabetes Institute (Nadi), includes a roadshow in 12 Orang Asli villages nationwide to educate and inform people about the causes, treatment and preven-

tion of diabetes.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir, a diabetic and a patron of Nadi, gave advice on diet and lifestyle.

"There are many medical methods to reduce the effects of the illness but it is also crucial to ensure we avoid or reduce consumption of sugar and starch."

He said this before receiving a mock cheque for RM1.34 million, presented by Yayasan Sime Darby chairman Tun Musa Hitam.