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PRIVATISATION

MB: Dr M sidelined Johor's interests

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JOHOR BARU: Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin has questioned Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's privatisation policies during the latter's tenure as prime minister.

He said there were instances during Dr Mahathir's administration, particularly in the privatisation of the two ports in Johor, when the interest of the state government was sidelined.

He said this had taken away opportunities from the state to gain from mega projects.

"If there are any mega projects involving a state or privatisation of

state assets, the state government should be given the opportunity to take part or have an interest in them.

"For example, during the privatisation of the Johor Port and the Port of Tanjung Pelepas, why wasn't the Johor government given an interest in them; give us 10 per cent or 20 per cent of their shares at least. This did not happen at that time and we know who the people in charge were at the time," he said without referring directly to Dr Mahathir.

He said this after attending Johor Gerakan's Chinese New Year open house in Taman Molek yesterday.

Present were Gerakan secretary general Liang Teck Meng and Gerakan state liaison committee chairman Datuk Teo Kok Chee.

Khaled said unlike during Dr Mahathir's administration, the current Johor government had significant interests in mega projects in the state.

He said local entities owned 42 per cent of the Forest City project, while the rest were foreign-owned.

Khaled said the recent attacks on the Forest City project were made to scare Johoreans.

"These are politically-motivated attacks so that certain quarters can get votes."