

# Dr M: It's all about the investments

## Formation of SG4 is for the betterment of the states, says ex-PM

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**PETALING JAYA:** The move to group four Perikatan Nasional-ruled states under "State Government 4" (SGI) is aimed at developing these states, says Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad (pic), dispelling talk that it is politically motivated.

He said SG4 hoped that the Federal Government would not stand in their way when cooperation is needed to work for the betterment of the states.

Furthermore, he said there was "nothing political" about him being appointed as the unofficial adviser to SG4 as he was once a prime minister with more than 22 years of experience.

Last week, Terengganu Menteri Besar Ahmad Samsuri Mokhtar announced that the MBs of Kelantan, Terengganu, Kedah and Perlis would come under a grouping known as SG4.

But SG4's naming of Dr

Mahathir as the "unofficial adviser" had raised eyebrows, with critics saying that it smacked of a political agenda.

When contacted yesterday, Dr Mahathir said: "When I was the Prime Minister, I noticed that sometimes they might have plans for development, but they did not know how to implement the plan.

"I have given them (the four MBs) ideas on how to implement difficult plans."

He also stressed the importance of knowing how to execute projects.

"Determining a project is simple. One can make many plans, but how do we achieve the objectives? That is the difficult part. I hope I can contribute by advising ways of overcoming obstacles to development," he said.

Dr Mahathir said foreign inves-



tors would usually work with the Federal Government.

But Kelantan, Terengganu, Kedah and Perlis, which are under the Opposition, believed that they could provide the necessary incentives to attract investments into their states, he said.

These four states, which were under PAS, were the poorest and in which 90% of the residents were Malays, he said.

"So it would seem that states populated by Malays are unable to grow. And since they have similar political affiliation, it is possible for them to work together," he said.

As such, he said SG4 was not being political but "it is just about developing these backward states which have good potential for development".

"We will have to find ways and

means to exploit the resources in these states, which include minerals, tourism potential, agriculture and fisheries, among others.

"Of course, in many ways, they have to work with the Federal Government. They are willing to do so, except that, of course, they are not with the ruling party.

"It is hoped that the Federal Government will cooperate where there is a need to get approvals from them," he added.

Ahmad Samsuri, when contacted, maintained that Dr Mahathir was chosen for his wide network and past achievements in developing the national economy.

"Is it wrong for us to harvest his know-how?" he said.

"He will act as a bridge to connect us with investors from Japan, (South) Korea and any other country where he still has the contacts. Bear in mind that he still has good links with investors from a number of developed countries."

Ahmad Samsuri, who is SG4

spokesperson, said there was "no logic" to accusations that Dr Mahathir's appointment was political in nature.

"Our efforts should not be seen as being disrespectful to the Federal Government as all the four state leaders have been cooperating with the Federal Government in all aspects," he said, citing how the Terengganu government had worked closely with Putrajaya in the East Coast Rail Link project.

He claimed that SG4's first meeting with Dr Mahathir, which took 40 minutes, had not touched on politics at all.

"It was all about how we can develop the economy of the four states," he said.

Ahmad Samsuri, who is a PAS vice-president, noted that Terengganu had appointed former Selangor Menteri Besar Tan Sri Khalid Ibrahim in 2018 to advise the state on economic matters as he had once led the most developed state in Malaysia.