

SPEECH BY Y.A.B. DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER  
AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF  
BATU PAHAT BRIDGE ON 28TH JULY 1967

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**Y.B. Tun Sambanthan<sup>1</sup>,**  
**Y.B. Dato' Menteri Besar<sup>2</sup>,**  
**Ladies & Gentlemen;**

It is not my intention to go into details of the cost and construction of this bridge because my Cabinet Colleague Tun Sambanthan has already mentioned this in his speech. However, it always gives me great pleasure as a member of the Alliance Government to be called upon to open a **new bridge**, because the basic policy and philosophy of the Alliance Government is tied very closely to **bridges**.

Our Development Policy which we have pursued and implemented both in the last Five Year Plan and in the present First Malaysia Development Plan is designed to **bridge the gap** between the **rich** and the **poor**, and our policy of Citizenship, racial harmony and National unity has also a philosophy of **bridging** any gap between the people of our country, the Malays, Chinese, and Indians.

It might be more appropriate, instead of having a Sailing Ship as a symbol, we had a bridge, because the whole essence of thinking of the Alliance Government is to make bridges not only across our rivers, but to make a **bridge** across every aspect of our national life towards unity, harmony and development of our country.

This bridge in Batu Pahat to-day is only one of many which are included in our Development Plan.

This bridge is the younger brother of the **Muar** bridge which was opened to the public recently.

Now, from Kuala Lumpur to Kota **Bahru** one can travel unhampered and unhindered by the ferries which used to delay communication in the East Coast.

Every single point, where in the old days there used to be an outdated and old-fashioned ferry, there is now a **new bridge** built within the planning process of the Alliance Government's Development Programme.

One place remains as yet **un-bridged**, and that is, the **Pahang** River from **Pekan** to **Peramu**, but recently I had the pleasure of witnessing the laying of the foundation-stone of a new bridge across the Pahang River performed by D.Y.M.M. Sultan of **Pahang**<sup>3</sup> and work is being carried on day by day on this new bridge which will, in a year's time, further facilitate access to the East Coast.

My Government is acutely aware of the importance of good communications throughout the country.

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1 .Menteri Kerja Raya, Pos dan Talikom.

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3 D.Y.M.M. Sultan Abu Bakar Ri'ayatuddin Al-Muadzam Shah ibni Al-Marhum Al-Mustasim Billah Sultan Abdullah

In fact, it may be said that the back-bone of the development of any country really lies on a sound, basic network of roads and bridges; roads which give access to be main industrial centres of our country and feeder-roads which give access to the agricultural areas of our country, so that we can develop our natural resources to the full.

A lot has been done towards achieving this in the last ten years since we became independent, and **many thousands of miles** of roads have been built - the feeder roads which are essential for the opening up of new land and federal roads which are essential to carry the main traffic for trade, commerce and industry of our country.

I cannot quote to you the increase in mileage of federal roads because by the improvement to our main federal highways Route 1, Route 2 and Route 3; as these **main roads** have been developed, their length of mileage has not been increased, but has been **shortened** by cutting corners, with new deviations and new by-passes!

Any road system in a developing country like ours is really like the blood-stream of the human-body; the more accessible and easy it is to reach the natural resources of our country, the potential land development areas, the potential timber areas and the potential mining areas - the quicker, cheaper and more easily will we be able to develop our country to its fullest potential!

With this in view, therefore, my Government has set up a Malaysia Transport Survey - an overall survey which will include both the Borneo States of **Sabah** and **Sarawak**, and the results of this survey will eventually become the **blue-print and guide-line** of further communication and road development within our country.

Such a survey will also include recommendations for the correct place and the correct positioning of any new ports which are necessary.

A lot of people are talking about the possibility of a new port on the East Coast of Western Malaysia; some say that it must be in **Kuantan**, some say it must be in **Kuala Terengganu**, and some say, it must be in **Kota Bahru**, some even say it must be in **Johore Bahru** or **Malacca**; but one does not make a port by putting one's finger on the map and saying that it will be here or it will be there!

Development, nowadays is a very sophisticated matter, and good development is the result of sound thinking and sound planning, so that we can get the maximum value in the future from the expenditure of the tax-payer's money which we use for development.

So, therefore, no one can say where this new port will be until the completion of the detailed survey, and that survey will include taking into **consideration** the main areas of future production of oil palm, timber and minerals, and then any new port will be so situated as to serve the maximum necessities for exporting our natural resources, and importing those things which are further necessary for our future development.

The West Coast of Western Malaysia is now well served by good road and rail communications. There is as yet, however, **no major road link** between the East Coast and the West Coast.

It is, therefore, the intention of my Government to press ahead with the

construction of a East-West highway which will bring life and communication to the main East Coast States of Kelantan, Terengganu and Pahang.

It was originally visualised that such an East-West highway would run on a direct line from Sungei Siput on the West to Kuala Brang on the East.

But, on detailed examination we changed our mind, because good road development planning is not just a matter of making a road on the shortest line from Point 'A' to Point 'B'.

Good road planning is based on following a route - which will not only give **good transport** facilities, but will also open up and develop the best available areas for land development, will stimulate the timber industry, and make the fullest use of our mineral resources, and even make the fullest use of the potential areas available for the harnessing of hydro-electrical power!

As you know, the last two to three years our country has suffered mostly in the North and in the East Coast from drastic flooding.

This power - the force of flood water which can bring death and disaster to so many people, if harnessed correctly, can be converted from being a source of death into becoming a source of life!

It is therefore, the intention of my Government, in addition to carrying out an overall Transport Survey, also to carry out, with the best professional skills available in the world, a survey designed to produce plans not only to stop flooding, but to turn and harness the same water-power which ruins so many acres of land, into a national potential of power, converted into hydro-electric schemes, which in turn will give sufficient electric power at low cost rates and help us to advance further with our policies and plans of industrialisation.

I am glad to announce that my Government has decided to give 'season tickets' to regular users of this bridge, so that any delay in crossing the bridge by lorry, bus or motorcar will be decreased to a minimum.

If any users of this bridge object to the fact that they have to pay a toll, they can console themselves with the fact that **every single cent** that is paid by them is being paid back into our National Development Fund; they are in fact contributing to the **greater** development of our country.

I would like to say **one thing more** about our National Development.

On the physical side of our national development, I am satisfied that everything is going according to plan.

The very opening of this bridge to-day marks another milestone in the physical development of our country, Malaysia.

But, nevertheless, I am dissatisfied with one aspect of our development as a Nation.

To quote, Johore, as an example, now has no less than 21 schemes developed by F.L.D.A., 15 of them are rubber, and 6 are oil-palm.

These schemes are giving a **new life and a new livelihood to so many thousands of settlers.**

Also in Johore, over the last ten years, many new schools, training colleges, and training centres have been set up.

Now, the question I ask is this.

Are we, as a Nation, making the fullest **use** of the **physical facilities of**

development which we have successfully built up over the last ten years?

It is my view, and I can assure everyone in Malaysia, that they need not worry about the prospect of the infrastructure of our national development with regard to the physical projects, of which this bridge is one!

Everything essential to our future development has been taken care of, and is included in our National Development Plan, but the time has come to take a **hard look** at the more **human** side of development.

If we, as a Nation, are really going to progress, our **emphasis** on development from to-day onwards must be an emphasis to produce a higher **output of human energy**, and this output can only come from our people themselves!

The lorries, the buses and motorcars which will use this bridge will also use petroleum power!

Advertisements say that if you buy Shell petrol you get added power from 'ICA', or if you use ESSO, you get added power from what advertisers call 'Boron'; they even say that to get the maximum use for your motor vehicle you can have a 'tiger' in you tank!

Applying this principle, to our national development, what is the use of thousands of settlers in new Federal land development schemes if they are not doing a full day's work? They too must have a tiger in their tank!

What is the use of a thousand new schools, if, in fact, our children sitting in these schools are not gaining the maximum value from the teaching instructions being given to them?

We have got to become an alert and active Nation with everyone doing a full day's job, putting the maximum effort into what they are doing whether they be working on land or working in a factory.

Now particularly, in the rural areas, our output per person is low. Why is it low? What is the reason?

Firstly, in my opinion, we have got to convince the people of our rural areas that they must shed and get rid of some of a few traditional and out-dated ideas, particularly, with regard to nutrition and sanitation.

The whole object of the operation of 'Gerakan Maju' which I launched sometime ago was designed to create an awareness amongst our people to move in the direction and bring up their children with them in the same direction on the path towards higher values of nutrition, sanitation and good health.

A human-being like a motorcar cannot travel at high speed, cannot work hard and do a full day's work unless he is fed with the best fuel available.

Therefore, I think the next phase in the development of our country will be an **important one and a very strong phase**, of not worrying about the physical development which is taking place, but must have a greater emphasis on the **human aspects** of development; the ability on our part as Malaysians to serve and adjust our life that we can put more and more into our daily task, cultivate our land more successfully, work harder and produce more.

And this cannot be done unless we pay attention to the basic essentials of out-put and these essentials are briefly this -

- to change our attitude towards nutrition;

- to change our attitude and make more use of existing health services;
- and
- to change our attitude towards sanitation and all the other more human way of life and ideas.

This in fact, in the spirit behind 'Gerakan Maju'.

The Alliance Government can do a lot, choose a Plan, and it can produce results.

But one thing the government cannot do is to penetrate the home.

What is required at the moment for the phased development of Malaysia is parental control, a mother and father **responsible** for bringing a child into this world must go beyond merely producing children, but must also be responsible for producing, training, up-bringing and turning their children out as good citizens, nourished with the right nutrition, well trained, with the right ideas, well-educated, and all this comes from the home; if every Malaysian is weak, our National future will also be weak!

In this task of **Nation-building**, it is not so much that we build a new Nation in the Cabinet Room with Ministers; **we will build a new** nation in the right place, in every **Malaysian home**, and the **quality** of the people who come out of our Malaysian home are the quality of the new Malaysia of the future.