

# PM: NO TIE WITH MUSA

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**JOHORE BARU, Fri. —** Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has dismissed widespread rumours that there were serious differences between him and Datuk Musa Hitam.

"There is no ill-feeling between us and those who spread such rumours are out to create trouble," the Prime Minister told more than 2,000 Barisan Nasional supporters after arriving at the Sultan Ismail Airport in Senai today.

Dr Mahathir is on a two-day official visit to Datuk Musa's home State, his first since becoming Prime Minister in 1981.

The Prime Minister and Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah were received on arrival by Mentri Besar Datuk Abdul Ajib Ahmad and other senior government officials as well as top Barisan leaders.

Dr Mahathir said Datuk Musa had not accompanied him on this trip because the Deputy Prime Minister was overseas "to attend to certain things."

"His absence here should not be misconstrued as proof that there are differences between us or that something has happened between us because nothing has happened," said Dr Mahathir.

Datuk Musa had left for the United

States before Hari Raya to attend the graduation ceremony of his daughter in New York.

Rumours that the top two leaders had fallen out have been circulating for some time, culminating in a report on Wednesday, apparently originating in Singapore, that Datuk Musa had submitted his resignation as Deputy Prime Minister but it was rejected.

Dr Mahathir told the gathering that rumour-mongers could be found in any group, including Umno.

He said these people were also spreading stories claiming that the recession had brought business in the country to a standstill and that there was widespread corruption involving certain people.

He advised the people, especially Umno members, not to fall prey to such rumours or to be used by others to spread such stories.

He said the nation could suffer and be ruined because of such rumours.

He pointed out that recently, rumours of a major local bank having financial problems led to panic withdrawals by depositors.

The Prime Minister said that while there was absolutely no basis to the rumours, such events could lead to foreigners losing confidence in the country's financial system.

"Eventually, we will be the ones who will feel the effects of such rumours."

Stressing that he was speaking "frankly and sincerely," Dr Mahathir said that truth would always win while whatever was untrue would eventually lose the people's attention.

"I like to get things off my chest. I believe this is the way it should be.