

# DON'T LISTEN TO RUMOURS'

# No rift with Musa — Dr M

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**JOHORE BARU, Fri — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today dismissed rumours of a rift between him and his deputy, Datuk Musa Hitam.**

He said there was "no problem" between him and Datuk Musa and described such talk as mere rumour-mongering by the "enemies of the people."

There was "no basis" for such rumour, he said on arrival at the Sultan Ismail Airport for his first official visit to Johore since becoming Prime Minister.

Dr Mahathir said Datuk Musa's absence during his two-day visit to the State should not be misinterpreted.

"I am now in Johore but Datuk Musa is not. He just happens to be overseas at the moment.

"This should not be misconstrued as something wrong between us. When there is work to be done, it has to be done, and if he has to be overseas, then he just has to be. There should not be any other interpretation to this fact."

Dr Mahathir also said that his official visit to the State had been delayed simply because there had been other urgent matters he had to attend to.

"I am visiting Johore as part of my duties as Prime Minister but I have also had to visit foreign countries. This has therefore delayed my official visit to this State.

"This is the simple reason behind it — there is no other hidden reason."

Dr Mahathir described the rumour-mongers as the "enemies of the people" and urged the

people not to be influenced by them. He said rumours used to be spread by the nation's enemies and foreigners but unfortunately, now, Malaysians were doing it themselves.

These people, he added, had only personal motives for spreading the lies, which include painting a wrong picture of the state of the country's economy such that it has affected businesses.

He alluded to the recent massive withdrawal of deposits from Public Bank as an example of malicious rumours which adversely affected the people.

Dr Mahathir also urged the people not to listen to unfounded allegations and rumours that "some people and so-and-so" were involved in corruption.

"What is true cannot be hidden and will ultimately come out. Lies won't benefit anyone, least of all the people," he told a crowd of 5,000

people — members of the Barisan Nasional component parties — who had turned out to greet him at the airport.

"We should be disciplined and not believe in unfounded rumours."

Dr Mahathir said there were established channels through which the people could voice their frustrations, fears and questions.

## Channels

"We should use these

existing channels to solve our problems and find out the truth of any matter, instead of resorting to spreading lies.

"We are responsible for making this system of channels work because we are the ultimate beneficiaries of such a system. If we don't, then we will also be the ones to suffer."

The Prime Minister said his statement and advice today were not confined merely to the State of Johore, but also to the whole country.

"What I have said is important and I am being very frank. I have nothing to hide and the people should refrain from making wrong interpretations of any situation in the country," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who was accompanied by his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah, was met by Menteri Besar Datuk Ajib Ahmad, Executive Councilors and State leaders of the Barisan component parties.

His motorcade proceeded to Johore Baru, greeted by thousands of flag-waving schoolchildren who lined the 24-kilometre Johore Baru-Senai highway.

In town, Dr Mahathir went on a walkabout at Jalan Segget to meet the people. An estimated 40,000 people turned out to meet the Prime Minister.