

DR M: GOVT WILL BE FAIR

'We'll try to be fair but we cannot satisfy everyone'

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PENANG, Fri. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad assured the people today that the Federal Government would treat all the various communities in the country as fairly as possible.

The Prime Minister said he was aware that there was dissatisfaction among the various communities and State Governments over the attention and al-

locations from the Federal Government.

"Some communities feel they are not getting what they deserve while some State Governments feel their allocations are not equal to those given to others.

"We will try to be fair to all but we cannot satisfy everyone," he told about 20,000 people who greeted him and Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah at Bayan Lepas airport.

Dr Mahathir said that if all the communities and State Governments felt dissatisfaction, then it showed the Federal Government was being fair to all.

He said that Penang, for example, had been given priority in de-

velopment since the colonial days.

After Merdeka, the Government continued to allow the development in Penang to be carried out side by side with that of the other States, he said.

"Penang was given its fair share but other States thought it was getting more in allocation."

He said they did not realise that Penang was smaller in size and as a result, development appeared more intensive.

Dr Mahathir said allocations were given by the Federal Government to the Penang Government to finance the building of the Penang Bridge which was promised to the people during the 1969 general election.

"It's a promise to the people and the Government did not break that promise," he added.

The completion of the bridge, Dr Mahathir said, would not only benefit the people of Penang, but also those of other States, especially Kedah, Perlis and Perak.

He added that the revenue collected from the bridge would be used to improve rural areas which normally did not derive much revenue.

Dr Mahathir reminded the people that the progress of a country did not depend solely on the Government but the attitude of the people. "If the people do not possess positive attitudes, the country will not progress even if the Government is efficient."

He called on the people to support the Government in its efforts to bring more development to the country.

Later, at the opening of the \$1.3 million Al-Huda Mosque at Sungai Ara, Dr Mahathir assured non-Muslims that the Government's policy to instil Islamic values would be carried out fairly.

"There is nothing for non-Muslims to fear. The Government's efforts to instil Islamic values will emphasise the values of fairness, goodness and tolerance," he said.

The policy, he said, would not be destructive to non-Muslims but unfortunately, there were some Muslims who had purposely ruined the image

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of Islam by their arrogance.

These people, he said, had tried to show they were more Islamic than the others.

He said these people were critical of the Government and had also created ill-feelings among the community towards the Government.

"Their actions have created confusion among non-Muslims. They have become afraid of Islam and this is not good for the Government's efforts to forge unity among the people," he said.

Dr Mahathir said if non-Muslims witnessed the cruelty or arrogance of leaders of certain so-called Islamic countries, they should not construe their actions as part of the Islamic teachings.

The leaders, he added, had acted through their own "temptations."

Dr Mahathir said he was happy to see the large number of non-Muslims who had turned up at today's opening of the mosque.

He said although many were invited guests, there were many who had come to witness the event.

He also advised Muslims not to alienate themselves from non-Muslims or to reject non-Muslims.

Those present also helped the mosque get a special \$48,000 allocation. When Dr Mahathir said the Federal Government would contribute \$48,000 to the mosque if \$2,000 could be collected on the spot, mosque officials hurriedly passed the hat around and collected the amount.

Also present were Chief Minister Dr Lim Chong Eu, Education Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Agriculture Minister Anwar Ibrahim and his deputy Dr Go Chong Teik.