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BUKIT GARAM (Sabah), Sat. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the country could not afford to have a State Government that is ruled by a political party which opposes the Federal Government.

Differences and misunderstandings between the Federal Government and the State Government would only result in hardship for the people, he told a crowd of about 2,000 here.

He said everyone had to co-operate in efforts to develop the country and every citi-

zen should make sure that the country was administered by those who were able to maintain peace and security.

"We do not wish to have misunderstandings among individuals, groups or between the Federal and State Governments."

Dr Mahathir said that since independence, much progress had been achieved both in the urban and rural areas.

He said that in Sabah, it could be seen that there had been many changes since Berjaya came to power.

The Prime Minister said he realised that more had to be done to develop the rural areas but the people should be patient because a lot of money was needed to implement programmes.

Dr Mahathir told Sabahans that to the Federal Government, they were just the same as people in other States.

He said that although the Government had

provided facilities, it expected the people to try to improve their living standard.

On the rattan estate in the area, Dr Mahathir said it was developed as a large-scale commercial venture and was now one of the biggest rattan cultivation areas in the region.

Earlier, the Prime Minister visited the rattan estate in Batu Putih and Tanjung Bulat.

He was briefed by the general manager of the Sabah Forestry Development Authority, Mr M.P. Udarbe.

Dr Mahathir and Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah are on a four-day official visit of Sabah and the Federal Territory of Labuan.

About 200 people from Tambunan had gathered at the Kota Kinabalu International Airport today in the hope of meeting Dr Mahathir. However, he flew direct from Kuala Lumpur to Sandakan.