

KL centre for rumour mongers

—Mahathir

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JITRA, Thurs. — Kuala Lumpur has been described as the centre for "rumour mongering activities" which are jeopardising not only the economy but also the political stability and security of the country.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri **Dr Mahathir** Mohamad said today the rumour mongers have been spreading adverse and untrue stories so that they could manipulate the share market in the Stock Exchange.

Addressing Kubang Pasu Barisan Nasional component party leaders, he said that the Malaysian Airline System (MAS) which went public recently was the latest target of the rumour mongers.

"They saw the potential of the shares and had wanted them very badly but could not stand the stiff competition. The response for MAS shares had been so overwhelming that for each unit there were between eight and 10 buyers.

"So, when these share speculators could not get their hands on the MAS shares, they began playing on racial sentiment by spreading stories that MAS shares had actually been allotted to the Malays and that the

Chinese would not get them.

"These stories created hatred and suspicion among the non-Malays. This is not true. The Malays only acquired 30 per cent of the shares which were offered to the public with the Chinese and others taking up the remaining shares available."

The rumour mongers have also been exploiting the MCA crisis and speculating the general election dates to manipulate the share market.

Integration

"These people have nothing to lose but all to gain by spreading the rumours. They will still make money if the prices of shares rise or plunge. Any which way, they will gain at the expense of others.

"I want the people to be extremely wary of such activities and not to easily succumb to rumours."

He described them as very irresponsible and greedy without any conscience for the well-being of the people and the country.

"They have nothing else to do other than spreading rumours.

Kuala Lumpur is full of this kind of people.

"The country will turn chaotic if we listen to these rumours."

However, he said, it was fortunate the situation had proven these people wrong time and time again.

On the current economic slowdown, he urged the people to accept and adapt to the situation.

"We must cut down our spending and make do with what we have besides increasing productivity.

"The Government on its part have drawn up several strategies to overcome the situation. However, the people must be patient and follow what the Government asks them to do."

The country's economy is not as bad as in some other neighbouring countries.

Dr Mahathir said the proposed Programme for the Integration of Pupils for Unity was designed to foster good relationship between the children of all ethnic groups in the country and not to kill languages other than Bahasa Malaysia as some people had suggested.

"The problem now is

that although all the teachers have supported the idea, there are certain politicians, who are bankrupt of ideas, trying to politicise the issue.

"We are not asking the schools to stop teaching in Mandarin or Tamil. All we ask is for the different schools to be located in one area and synchronise their periods for games so that the children can mix and play together.

"This will eventually create racial integration."

He hoped the people would understand the idea behind the proposed system and not to fall for adverse stories about it.

By **KHAIRUDDIN HASSAN**