

PM: Treat slowdown as a challenge

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KUCHING, Thurs. — The Prime Minister today called on the people to respond positively to the economic slowdown by being more disciplined in their efforts to help achieve the objectives of the Fifth Malaysia Plan.

The people — the civil servants, the businessmen, the farmers and others — must also work hard to ensure the success of the projects that had been planned so that the nation could continue

to progress.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said that rather than allow the global economic slowdown that had affected the country to dampen their spirits, they should treat it as a challenge.

The people must be proud of the nation and be willing to demonstrate this to the world by preventing the country from being overcome by the slowdown.

By ZAINON AHMAD

Unlike other countries, Malaysia is still growing even though at a much slower rate, he said.

"This is because of our resilience and our willingness to work hard," he told a gathering at the Central Padang.

Among those present were Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah, Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Haji Taib Mahmud, and leaders of PBB, SNAP, SUPP and PBDS — all component parties of the Sarawak

Barisan Nasional.

Dr Mahathir said the nation could achieve what it had set out to do because of the political stability and racial harmony.

There is also close co-operation between the Government and the people, made possible by the concept of the Barisan Nasional.

Harmonious

Dr Mahathir said under the Barisan Nasional concept which ensured power-sharing, all the races in the nation were represented in the Government.

In Sarawak, the parties representing all the communities in the State worked harmoniously together in the Barisan Nasional.

He said because Sarawak was administered by the Barisan Nasional, there was harmonious relationship with the Federal Government which was also headed by the Barisan Nasional.

He said this was the ideal form of Government for the State considering its multi-racial character.

"In this way the Government does not forget anyone in the country, however isolated the area he lives in," he said.

Dr Mahathir added that the Government planned to provide all sorts of amenities to the people but they would take some time to be implemented in view of the economic slowdown.

Others had other demands on the Government but they should exercise patience.

"They may have to wait longer if the economic slowdown is prolonged, but finally they will get what they want," he said.