

Fair share for all in Barisan

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SIBU, Thurs. — There is room in the Barisan Nasional for all who believe in its multi-racial concept, the Prime Minister declared here today.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the Barisan Nasional was set up on a power-sharing basis among the various parties and races to ensure harmony and stability in the country.

Dr Mahathir, who is also the Barisan Nasional chairman, said the coalition's concept was one involving the participation of all races in the Government.

"In the Barisan Nasional, we are not greedy for power. We believe in power-sharing so that all the communities and political parties will have a fair share," the Prime Minister told about 20,000 people who had gathered at the

By **JAMES RITCHIE**

town padang here to greet him at the start of his two-day official visit to Sarawak.

Among those present were Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah, Sarawak Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud, his wife, Datin Laila Taib, the State Minister-in-attendance, Da-

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tuk Edward Jeli, State Ministers, local dignitaries and senior civil servants.

The Prime Minister said the formation of the Barisan Nasional had ensured that the interests of all the races, including the minority groups, were safeguarded, besides giving them a chance to run the country, at least at the local level.

Describing the Barisan Nasional system as a successful formula, the Prime Minister said it had earned the country world respect.

"Such success makes possible rapid development as well as peace and harmony among the people.

"Because we believe in the concept of Barisan Nasional we have achieved peace while development continues."

Dr Mahathir said that for peace and stability to continue to prevail, it was essential to have a strong Government.

The strength of the Government was derived from the people, while a weak Government would bring about the downfall of the people and the country.

It was also important for Malaysia to have people who were disciplined, sincere and honest, and who could work together for peace in the country.

Referring to the local scene, the Prime Minister urged Sarawakians not to listen to certain political groups that

were attempting to cause a rift between this East Malaysian State and the rest of the nation by making unfounded allegations.

He criticised opposition parties which claimed that Sarawak was not given priority in development efforts, saying: "These allegations are untrue as we practise a policy of even distribution of development in accordance with the needs of the respective States.

"The truth is we treat all States with equal importance and respect," said Dr Mahathir.

He said the Government was dedicated to working for the people,

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irrespective of whether they were in Sarawak or Kuala Lumpur.

Earlier, Chief Minister Datuk Taib, speaking on behalf of the people of Sarawak, pledged the State Government's continuing support for the Prime Minister.

He said Malaysia had entered a new era of development and had gained world-wide respect under Dr Mahathir's leadership.

Datuk Taib said Sarawak admired Dr Mahathir for facing the challenges with great courage and conviction.

"Our Prime Minister is a man who stands firm and does not run away from his responsibilities because he believes that the nation must stay united."

"He is prepared to face the challenges ahead while continuing to bring about development and instilling new ideas," he added.