

PM: We forged lasting racial understanding

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MUAR, Mon. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the Barisan Nasional is a permanent pact forged between the communities to work together for a united and prosperous nation.

It is not an *ad hoc* front established near elections for the purpose of winning seats but an enduring organisation for ensuring peace and harmony in the country, he said.

He was alluding to the recently formed but disintegrating opposition front.

He said the communities are represented on the council of the Barisan Nasional, a coalition which was an expansion of the Alliance formed in 1951, by leaders of parties of which they were members.

"The Barisan Nasional is a symbol of racial harmony," he said when addressing election workers of the component parties in the compound of the Diamond Jubilee Hall.

The Prime Minister, accompanied by Datin Seri Siti Hasmah, was given a rousing welcome at the high school padang.

By ZAINON AHMAD

Among those present were Menteri Besar Datuk Ajib Ahmad and State Barisan Nasional leaders.

He said unlike the Pasled Opposition front, decisions made at the Barisan Nasional council meetings were arrived at through the consensus of the representatives of the communities.

With the harmony, he said, there was stability and with stability there was development.

Communal

Anyone who was sincere and honest could not help but admit that the existing harmony "in our multi-racial society has been achieved through the efforts of the Alliance and the Barisan Nasional.

"Therefore, anyone or party opposing the Barisan Nasional is opposing racial harmony."

Dr Mahathir said for all its claims that it was a multi-racial party, the DAP was generally championing the interests of one community.

He said Pas was also a communal party despite its recent attempt to portray itself as a champion of the other races.

Even the Malays were wary of the party's objective of setting up an Islamic State as it could turn out to be more of a "Hadi State", as the idea was conceptualised by party vice-president Haji Hadi Awang, he said.

The Barisan Nasional leader said Haji Hadi's statement that there would be no pop music in Pas' Islamic State could also include other types of music. "After all, we know which country he receives his inspiration from."

Later, the Prime Minister met leaders of Chinese temple, cultural and educational associations and guilds at the Pagoh Umno building.

He was given a list of small projects which the leaders wanted the Government to implement in Muar.

Dr Mahathir said he will make allocations for the project.

He said the people should make use of their elected representatives as "postmen" to submit their requests or complaints to the Government.

Wherever possible, the Government would try to accommodate their requests but they should also understand the present financial constraints facing the Government.