

PM: No move to idolise leaders

KANGAR, Sun. — The Government is not trying to make certain leaders the object of a personality cult, **Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad** said today.

The Prime Minister said he regretted that some people had continued to claim that the Government was trying to promote certain individuals.

The Government did not intend nor encourage the people to adulate specific leaders, Dr Mahathir said when launching the *Loyalty with the People Movement* (Semarak) for Perlis at Sun-

gai Batu Pahat, 12km from here.

Dr Mahathir said he had stopped the practice of naming schools after VIPs when he became Education Minister in 1974.

The directive was extended to the naming of roads, buildings and historical places when he became Prime Minister in 1981, he added.

"This is because the Government believes in serving the people and not claiming credit for it," he said.

"Such places are only

named after the Rulers and not the politicians as we need not promote the politicians."

Dr Mahathir said he rejected a suggestion by Penang Chief Minister Dr Lim Chong Eu to name the Penang Bridge after him.

He added that there was no school, road or any landmark that had been allowed to be named after him.

"Can you find a school called Sekolah Dr Mahathir?" he asked the crowd.

"We also do not call each other Bapak this or Bapak

that, not like in the past. We now only hear people calling Bapak (father) at home," he said.

About 20,000 people turned up for the launching of the campaign.

Fourteen traditional houses, representing the 14 electoral constituencies in the State, were also built for the occasion.

Dr Mahathir, who was accompanied by Menteri Besar Dr Abdul Hamid Pawanteh and Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat, arrived in a motorcade led by eight Proton Sagas.

The Prime Minister said Semarak was launched to foster co-operation between the people and the leaders.

"It is to show loyalty to the Rulers, leaders and the people," he said.

"Loyalty is not just to leaders but always vice versa."

Dr Mahathir said leaders should in fact show loyalty towards the people — the ones who put them in power — and to take care of their interests and well being.

He said it was the people who picked the leaders in a democratic way and thus it

was now the leaders' turn to show loyalty.

"The leaders must reciprocate by always abiding by the wishes of the people and providing them a better life," Dr Mahathir said.

"Without this respect for one another the country will not develop or prosper ... we would not be able to administer the country peacefully."

Dr Mahathir said the country did not need leaders who were only interested in acting like VIPs

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and shied away from the crowd.

"We do not want those who drive past in Mercedes Benz and live in luxury away from the people," he said.

"We also do not want leaders who visit the people only during the elections. In fact, such leaders are not worthy of support."

Dr Mahathir said that national leaders might be busy "but fostering closer rapport with the people is important too."

He said that through Semarak, leaders and the people could be brought closer and problems hindering development could be ironed

out with understanding and tolerance.

He added that every citizen should love the country and work for its progress.

"If we do not, who else will? Can the foreigners do this for us?" he asked.

"All right-thinking Malaysians who love the nation must not act against the country or smear our reputation," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that singing loyalty songs alone was not enough. The songs should be fully understood and what they teach should be put into practice, he added.

Dr Mahathir later launched a gotong-royong project to plant 400 trees in the area.