

# BARISAN WON'T WOO URBAN VOTERS: PM

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MALACCA, Mon. **Datuk Seri** Dr Mahathir **Mohamad** said today the Barisan Nasional accepts the decision of the urban people not to support the Government during general elections.

However, the Prime Minister said despite their "anti-establishment" stand, the Government would never penalise them but continue to develop and beautify towns and cities.

"It is their democratic right. It is not that we do not need their support. Of course we need it.

"But if they choose to reject us, there is little we can do except say, okay, so be it," he told reporters after having lunch with state Barisan leaders at Chief Minister Datuk Seri Abdul Rahim Tamby

Chik's residence here.

He said that throughout the Barisan's history, the coalition had never drawn support from the urban areas, except in one or two towns.

"It appears that despite whatever we do for the towns we will lose seats which we contest. We have accepted this.

"What can we do if they have this stand that they must be anti-establishment? We cannot punish them for it. It is not something that can be forced," he said.

Earlier, addressing about 5,000 people at the Batu Berendam airport.

Dr Mahathir said Barisan parties with large membership in town areas need not try too hard to woo the urban people because they would not support the party no matter what the Government did

"It would be pointless for us to try to gain the support of the urban people if it would only create conditions which could destabilise the country," he added.

Dr Mahathir also urged Barisan parties to resolve problems through discussions, unemotionally and rationally.

"All problems can be resolved if we sincerely want them to be settled," he said.

He said the people should be thankful that Malaysia had always been a peaceful and progressive country despite the potential danger of racial problems.

He said there were many races in the country, with differences in customs, cultures and religions, factors which were often causes of enmity among races.

Dr Mahathir said that in several multi-racial countries, the people had not had peace for years because of racial strife.

He said Malaysia was fortunate not to have such problems. "Sometimes we

take these for granted and forget that we are blessed with political stability," he added.

He said that with the CPM's agreement to lay down their arms, curfew in some areas were also lifted and the people were free to go where they wanted to without fear.

Dr Mahathir said 1989 had been an eventful and significant year for the country.

He said besides achieving success in sports events, Malaysia played a crucial role in international politics through hosting CHOGM and by its place in the United Nations Security Council.

"The economy has improved and many of the unemployed are now working. Prosperity is more evident as people are buying more cars, especially the Proton Saga," he said.