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Umno-palace ties fine, says Mahathir

By Antonius Tang

KOTA BARU, Thurs. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that he sees no confrontation between Umno and the palace.

"We have no problem with the istana ... but only (with) one person who is clever at making use of everybody," he told reporters after meeting with Kelantan Barisan Nasional officials and community leaders at the

state Umno building here.

The Prime Minister said the relationship between the Kelantan palace and the Government was good but for "this man who has been harassing the people."

"Sometimes, I am met with poor reception when I come here because government officers and others have been threatened and prevented from coming to greet me," he said.

He was replying to a question about how Se-

mangat 46 and speculated palace influence could figure in the general election.

To another question, he said Kelantan Umno was getting stronger day by day and was ready for the general election.

He also said many PAS members were turning against their party because they were unhappy with its co-operation with the DAP.

On his one-day visit to Kelantan, Dr Mahathir

said it was the first stop in his nationwide tour to meet leaders and members of Barisan component parties at state level.

"At our meeting, I reminded them of the roots of the Alliance and Barisan and how we have managed to maintain racial harmony and rapid economic growth.

"We are a government representing all races and responsible to all the people. And we give priority to maintaining harmony

and striving for progress," he said.

On the absence of any MCA leader at this morning's gathering in Bachok to mark Farmers, Livestock Rearing and Fishermen Day, Dr Mahathir said the party leaders might have been too busy to join in the tour.

"It is all right as our main aim is to meet state Barisan leaders. If they (federal leaders) can come, good. If not, never mind," he said.