

Dr M: Sukma milestone in unity efforts

# Federal-State ties

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# priority of BN

By James Ritchie

**KUCHING, Fri. —** Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the Barisan Nasional remained a strong Government because it believed in constantly working towards strengthening ties between the Federal and State Governments.

The Prime Minister said this had always been the thrust in the BN Government's approach towards consolidating national integration.

He added it was important that this approach be maintained and that only the Barisan was able to effectively do this.

In this respect, he was happy that the Malaysia Games (Sukma) staged here had become another important landmark in the establishment of closer "family ties" among the people.

He was speaking to a crowd of about 3,000 Barisan Nasional Tiga supporters, many of them bearing Sukma flags, in front of the parade ground of the VIP arrival hall at the Kuching International Airport this evening. He is here to officially close the games tonight.

The Prime Minister was accompanied by his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, Minister of Justice Datuk Dr Sulaiman Daud and Sports Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

#### □ PM PRAISES SARAWAK FOR SUCCESSFUL SUKMA GAMES: P2

They were received by Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud, the State Cabinet and other State dignitaries.

He said Sarawak had developed since it became independent through Malaysia 25 years ago. This was possible because the system of Government gave all communities a chance to progress.

Dr Mahathir said that Malaysia was blessed with peace and harmony, pro-

sperity and good fortune and people who worked closely with each other.

The country was also fortunate that it did not suffer natural disasters or had communal wars like in some countries, which have resulted in the loss of thousands of lives.

He said that Malaysia was today well-known throughout the world as an exemplary country, which has developed by leaps and bounds, and was the envy of many developing nations.

"I hope that the family ties developed during Sukma will be strengthened so that we can build a Malaysia which is united, strong and motivated."

In a lighter vein, he said that Sarawak's soccer slogan of *Nyap Sayot*, which started out as a battle cry, had now become a unifying force and added it was fitting that Sarawak, the hosts, had come out tops in Sukma with 44 gold medals.

He also joked that Sarawak could have won more golds if Tan Sri Abdul Taib had not instructed Sarawak not to go for 46 — an apparent reference to opposition party Semangat 46.