

Kelantan, Sabah stagnant, says PM

SANDAKAN, Thurs. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that all the States, except Kelantan and Sabah, were enjoying fast development due to economic and political stability.

The Prime Minister said Kelantan and Sabah were no longer enjoying economic growth as they were out of the Barisan Nasional fold.

"Kelantan and Sabah are governed by opposition parties whose leaders are only interested in becoming Menteri Besar, Chief Minister or aspiring for other high government posts.

"They do not care what happens to the people as long as they can be Menteri Besar and Chief Minister."

Addressing more than 15,000 people at the municipal field here this evening, Dr Mahathir, who is also the BN chairman, said the two States would prosper if the BN was at their helm.

The gathering was organised by the Kinabatangan, Jambongan and Sandakan Umno divisions.

Dr Mahathir's visit was telecast live by Radio and Television Malaysia.

Dr Mahathir, whose last official visit to the State was nine years ago, said the Fed-

eral Government had an obligation to provide assistance to Kelantan and Sabah but could not render such aid as the two State Governments were opposed to the BN.

"It is difficult to provide assistance and when we (Federal Government) do extend such aid, Kelantan and Sabah leaders claim that the assistance is given by them."

He said the Government has maintained economic growth at eight per cent although the world was facing an economic slowdown. This was due to BN's capability in running the Government.

"But there is economic slowdown in Kelantan and Sabah and this only shows the capability of their State Governments."

Dr Mahathir noted that several years ago Sabah was ahead of Sarawak in terms of development but this was no longer so.

Sarawak was far more developed than Sabah today, clearly indicating that States outside the BN fold tended to lose.

"They are not progressing because they lack good leadership and they suffer from poor administration and

have poor financial standings. And the most important thing is that their leaders are more concerned about a handful of people rather than the rakyat."

He said that although there was hardly any unemployment in Peninsular Malaysia, the problem existed in Kelantan and Sabah.

While people from neighbouring countries were coming to Malaysia to seek jobs, there had been an exodus of people from Kelantan to other States ruled by the BN in search of employment.

On Sandakan, Dr Mahathir said the town was known as the town of millionaires several years ago but this was no longer so.

He said Chinese schools in Sabah would not have to depend on government financial aid if the millionaires, who were mostly Chinese, were still around.

"These businessmen have no more business ... now the Chinese schools want assistance from the Government."

He said the PBS Government, which is vigorously fishing for support from the Chinese community, recently allocated \$1 million to help Chinese schools.

He said \$1 million would not go far as many Chinese schools needed aid.

On Umno's entry into Sabah, Dr Mahathir thanked the PBS as it was because of it that Umno was in the State.

"PBS' pullout from Barisan Nasional during the last general election was what caused Umno to come to Sabah."

Umno has 240,000 members in Sabah. The State has the second largest Umno membership after Johor.

At divisional level, Kinabatangan has the largest membership, overtaking the Kubang Pasu division headed by Dr Mahathir.

Among those present at the function were Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat, Land and Co-operative Development Minister Tan Sri Sakaran Dandai, Deputy Minister of Trade and Domestic Affairs Datuk Kadir Sheikh Fadzil and Sabah Umno deputy head Tun Datu Mustapha Datu Harun.

Later at a dinner organised by local Umno leaders, Dr Mahathir said the BN Government would be fair to 'all races regardless of their religious background