

Dr M: Certain quarters in

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TAWAU, Thurs. — Certain quarters in Sabah want to isolate the State from the rest of Malaysia in the hope that "they could become bigger", Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

He said these quarters still harped on such sentiments even though they believed that it was no longer possible for Sabah to secede from Malaysia.

Dr Mahathir said the State Government had resorted to the propaganda of inciting anti-peninsula as well as anti-Sarawak sentiments.

Speaking at a news conference at the airport here before leaving for Kuala Lumpur, the Prime Minister said the overwhelming turnout at the BN Youth gathering here yesterday demonstrated the support of the people of Tawau for the BN.

He believed that if the Opposition did not resort to unhealthy tactics most of the people of Tawau would

support the BN.

"They know that only the BN government can effectively develop Sabah," he said.

On the statement by Chief Minister Datuk Joseph Pairin Kitingan that the State Government's move requiring Malaysians from Sarawak and the peninsula to produce their passports when entering the State was for security reasons, Dr Mahathir said security matters were under the jurisdiction of the Federal Government.

"Security is the responsibility and problem of the Federal Government and

not the State Government," he said.

The Prime Minister said the State Government did not even have the police and army whereas the Federal Government had all the facilities and manpower to maintain security in the State.

He said Pairin's aim was to propagate the slogan of Sabah for Sabahans.

Asked if the relationship between Sabah and the Federal Government will improve if Pairin is replaced as PBS president, Dr Mahathir said it was possible but the person who replaced him

bid to isolate Sabah

must have a Malaysian outlook and not the narrow outlook propagated by Pairin.

Asked if he had any particular person in mind, Dr Mahathir said it was for the people of Sabah to decide.

Later, on his arrival in Kuala Lumpur, he said the people of Sabah wanted continued peace and development and would not succumb to threats or intimidation by any party.

He said he was happy with the developments taking place in Sabah and had observed that the people were friendly and believed they were all Malaysians.

"They have shown that they are supportive of the Barisan Nasional government and they want peace and development — just like all other Malaysians," he said.

Accompanying the Prime Minister were Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat, Housing and Local Government Minister Dr Ting Chew Peh and Law Minister Syed Hamid Syed Albar.

Dr Mahathir said the mammoth gathering at the Barisan Nasional Youth rally in Tawau yesterday was testimony of the support the

people of Sabah have for the Barisan Nasional government.

He said Umno could succeed politically in Sabah as the people there had confidence in the party which they believed could bring further development to the State.

On his visit to Ireland, Dr Mahathir said it was to foster better ties between the two countries.

"Ireland has agreed to accept our students in its medical faculties. This will be to our benefit as Britain is not accepting as many students as it used to," he said.