

# Nurture 'Malaysian-ness', PM tells Sarawak leaders

KUCHING, Tues. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad advised Sarawak leaders to help nurture a greater sense of "Malaysian-ness" among the people.

He explained that this was important because when the "nation prospers, the State will also prosper".

Dr Mahathir made these remarks when 24 State Assemblymen from the Sarawak Backbenchers' Club (SBBC) called on him in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

A Press release issued by SBBC today said the group, which was led by Assemblyman for Dalat Datuk Effendi Norwawi, also called on Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The visits were to personally convey SBBC's appreciation for the support given to the State by both the na-

tional leaders.

It said that Dr Mahathir also complimented Sarawak leaders for having done very well to ensure close Federal-State ties.

"The Prime Minister also reassured them of the Federal Government's sympathy and support for the State's efforts to promote tourism and downstream processing of timber into products like furniture."

Dr Mahathir also told the group about the importance of government backbenchers' role as the Government could only speak with confidence and take decisive actions only with their (backbenchers) backing.

The statement also mentioned that Anwar also promised to look into the State's needs, such as poverty eradication and the provision of basic infrastructure

such as schools and water and electricity supply.

Speaking on behalf of the SBBC, Effendi, who is also chairman of both Sarawak SEDC and Bank Utama, told both leaders that the progress and prosperity enjoyed by the State were because of political stability which all members of SBBC valued and would defend and preserve.

He added that stability was also brought about by the unity forged by Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud.

The assemblymen also pledged their full support for the Prime Minister's outstanding leadership, his efforts towards achieving Vision 2020, and promised to give their very best to ensure another major victory for the Barisan Nasional in the coming general election.