

# PM: Police are neutral

By Nuraina Samad

PENANG, Sat. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the police and the security forces are not tools of the Government to be used in an oppressive manner or to carry out unlawful acts.

"They are instruments of democracy. They are trained and professional and maintain peace and order with discipline, guided by the laws of the country. I must congratulate them for carrying out their duties without fear or favour in trying times, especially during the general election," the Prime Minister said when opening the Bandar Baru Air Itam police station here.

Dr Mahathir said the police were neutral and an agency for the enforcement of the law.

"They would therefore, take action against anyone who breaks or violates the law, whoever it is, whether the person is a Government Minister, Chief Minister or Menteri Besar."

Dr Mahathir said Malaysians should be thankful for having a police force that was thorough and professional in maintaining peace and which allowed them to constantly feel safe.

He said Malaysians should appreciate this but unfortunately, he added, certain quarters are inciting (the people) not to value the peace.

Dr Mahathir said these quarters, which practised the politics of fear and hatred to get sympathy and votes, made allegations that there would be racial riots if they won in the election.

They also incited the people to hate the Government and the police, he added.

Dr Mahathir said this was "very bad and dangerous" for the country and said that he believed that the police would maintain peace in the country whoev-



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er won (in the election).

Acknowledging that the police were facing much pressure and many challenges, especially during the run-up to the general election, the Prime Minister said it was unfortunate that there were quarters who attempted to challenge the authority of the police by defying police orders. They did this to provoke the police into acting against them so as to gain the sympathy of voters.

He said they also wanted the sympathy of foreigners, including the foreign media, which often sees developing countries like Malaysia as backward and without the capability to administer themselves.

"To them (the foreign media), developing countries are happy to use powers to oppress the people and the police are used by Governments (of developing countries) to oppress the people.

Dr Mahathir said the police would have to abide by the law which required them to act against anyone who broke the law.

"And if the police, in order to protect their credibility, take rational action, in accordance with the law, the foreign media will say that the police are using force, against, for instance,

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# People told to value racial harmony

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the opposition party, on behalf of the Government.

"This is not true at all. If the law is violated in the country, we do not care who it is, the police will take action (against them). This is their duty."

Dr Mahathir said, today, even the Rulers are not above the laws of the country.

"The country respects the law and we follow the rule of law and we will apply the law as provided by the law.

"There is no use in having laws which are not implemented because of political reasons, whether this (reason) is from the side of the Government or the Opposition."

Dr Mahathir reiterated that democracy did not mean freedom for the people to do whatever they wanted, as in some Western countries.

"Our democracy must be orderly. We must follow the rule of law. We cannot have absolute freedom ... democracy and the law are compatible and can live together."

The Prime Minister also reminded the people to place a high value on the racial harmony that had been achieved in this country "at some expense in 1969".

"Two hundred people died (in the racial riots of 1969). We do not want to see that happen again," he said, stressing that this was not to scare the people as the Opposition had alleged, but to remind them of the importance of racial harmony in Malaysia.

The Prime Minister was accompanied by his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali and Chief Minister Dr Koh Tsu Koon.

Also present were Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Rahim Noor, State police chief Deputy Commissioner Datuk Salleh Mat Som and senior State police officers.

About 5,000 people, including police personnel and their families as well as local residents, were there.

For scores of people, the old and the young of all races, it was an opportunity not to be missed as they approached Dr Mahathir and Dr Siti Hasmah to shake their hands and get their autographs.