

# PM: Close ranks now that polls are over

By Saiful  
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JITRA, Sat. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad today said the people should close ranks after the general election, but added that he was saddened by the attitude of certain opposition leaders who discouraged their members from doing so with supporters of the Barisan Nasional.

He said these opposition leaders preferred their members to permanently resent those in the BN.

"They are afraid that if their members close ranks with BN supporters, their members will vote for the BN in the next general elec-

tion," he said at a thanksgiving function organised by the Kubang Pasu Wanita Co-operative at Kampung Wang Tepus here.

Also present were Menteri Besar Tan Sri Osman Aroff and State Executive Councillor Datuk Abdul Rahman Ibrahim. About 1,000 villagers attended the function.

Dr Mahathir said the split among the people was serious especially in Kelantan where the members of the opposition parties boycotted *kenduri* and wedding ceremonies.

He said supporters of Umno and the BN did not have any intention to make foes with anyone.

"We are going to make

friends with everybody regardless of their political affiliations," he said.

The Prime Minister reminded the people of the objective of having a general election.

"It is merely to select the representatives of the people. We elect a Government which can chart the betterment of the people.

"We are not holding an election to split the people. Islam calls for unity and everyone should strive to maintain unity," he added.

The Prime Minister was also saddened by accusations that the members of a certain political party were more Islamic than those in Umno.

"Actually, Umno mem-

bers are more Islamic because we strive for unity and for us the Muslims are a big family," he added.

Dr Mahathir also reminded the elected representatives of their duties and responsibilities.

"The people are not electing the *wakil rakyat* to give them allowances and cars.

"They are elected to carry out their duties. We want to work for the religion, people and nation.

"If we cannot work, the people will not elect us in the next general election or the party will decide to drop us," he added.

Dr Mahathir also reminded the people of their role to ensure the nation continued to achieve success.

"We will only be respected if we are successful. The world will not respect a weak nation," he added.

The Prime Minister also called on the people to acquire skills to produce sophisticated products.

He said he was impressed with the skills of the Japanese in producing sophisticated items during his visit to Japan.

"The operators of small and medium-scale industries should acquire these skills.

"The Government is willing to obtain assistance from the Japanese, including bringing them to Malaysia to teach us the skills.

"We should not only confine our SMIs to weaving mats and baskets."