

We can manage our country, says Mahathir

By DERRICK VINESH and TUNKU SHAHARIAH

PENANG: Malaysians should not allow themselves to be "ruled" by foreigners after having struggled for independence for the past 40 years, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said Malaysians were capable of resolving their "domestic problems" without having to depend on outsiders for help and advice.

"This is our country. We can manage our country ourselves," he said when addressing a mammoth gathering of over 10,000 supporters at the Penang International Sports Arena (Pisa) last night.

Dr Mahathir said the outsiders were only good at "teaching" and implying that the economic slowdown had been caused by inefficient management.

"For the past 40 years we have attained indepen-

dence without their help and we can now see for ourselves how much growth we have achieved.

"Therefore we do not need their help now although we know if we do not follow them, they will further suppress our economy," he added.

The Prime Minister said he was confident that Malaysians would not be willing to let its Government "bow down" to outsiders.

He also urged the rakyat to stand united behind the Government in fending off efforts to disunite the people, particularly in the trying times of the economic slowdown.

He also advised the people to ignore baseless allegations and efforts to discredit the Government by "others" via pamphlets and the Internet which was being "misused" as the "modern day poison-pen letter".

Dr Mahathir also stressed that the Government was taking steps to

address the economic problems and develop the Economy by spurring an annual growth of 7% until the year 2020.

"However, there are factions who are not satisfied with our success and they are jealous. They do not want to see us attain our Vision 2020.

"They purposely devalue the ringgit through ways created by them to attain power and personal gains," he said.

Among those present at the gathering were the Prime Minister's wife Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, his wife Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, Penang Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon and wife Puan Sri Chui Kah Peng, former Penang Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Lim Chong Eu, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, ministers, state executive councillors and Barisan Nasional component party leaders.