

PM Opposition promise On Labuan a gimmick

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LABUAN: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said last night that the opposition's promise to give Labuan back to Sabah was a political gimmick.

"Don't be taken in by such promises of the opposition which is spreading hatred towards the Government," the Prime Minister told a crowd of thousands at the Labuan Square field.

Dr Mahathir said it was not out of greed that the Federal Government took Labuan, but to bring about development to the place.

He said the Barisan Nasional government had brought economic progress and development by making it an international offshore financial centre and would continue to develop it.

Nearly soaked wet, Dr Mahathir, standing under an open sky continued his 45-minute speech undeterred through lightning, rain and thunder. The crowd stood in awe.

"What is important is a strong Barisan government will ensure that the rakyat prosper with the country economically," he said.

Explaining how the Alliance was expanded to become Barisan so that it could accommodate economic aspirations of the bumiputras through the New Economic Policy (NEP) and give greater political rep-

resentation for non-bumiputras in the Government, Dr Mahathir said:

"Foreigners and our enemies who predicted that Malaysia would be destroyed as riots would continue after May 1969 have been proven wrong.

"There have been no riots after that."

He said the past ill feelings among the various communi-

ties had been wiped out under Barisan because the Government was fair to everyone and gave equal opportunities to all.

"Though we are a small nation, Malaysia is today the 17th largest trading nation.

"This was done using our own resources and with little help from foreigners."

Dr Mahathir said because of the support of every communi-

ty in Labuan and throughout the country the Barisan government had brought political stability and Malaysia enjoyed continued economic growth with unity.

Dr Mahathir will leave for Sabah today to continue his nationwide tour to explain the current economic and political situation in the country.