

Don't be misled by Opposition, Chinese urged

By DERRICK VINESH

PENANG: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday urged the Chinese community not to be "brainwashed" by the Opposition with issues created to incite hatred against the Government.

He urged the MCA, Gerakan and PPP to warn the Chinese community not to fall into the DAP trap.

He said the DAP had exaggerated issues concerning the Chinese to instigate them to hate the Government.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Barisan Nasional president, said the DAP had been blowing up several issues to get back at Barisan Nasional for garnering strong support from the Chinese during the 1999 general election.

"In past elections, many urbanites would usually allow the Opposition to win because they know they will not be able to form a government.

"They felt the need for Opposition representatives so that the Government would not be too strong. Penangites too usually picked Opposition representatives, including Lim Kit Siang and Karpal Singh.

"They (Lim and Karpal) used to win in any seat in Penang in the past, but in the 1999 election, they lost. This shows that urbanites too have realised the importance of maintaining peace and sim-

plicity in the country.

"However, after they had lost, they started to work hard to regain support especially from the Chinese.

"They found that the Chinese had given strong support to the Government and so they needed to find a way to make the Chinese hate the Government," he said when he met more than 3,000 Barisan Nasional leaders at a hotel last night.

He noted that the Chinese have been part of the Barisan Nasional under the various component parties and that he was never angry with them and neither was he angry with the Chinese in general.

"But this group was quick at translating what I had said as a threat to all Chinese in the country, so that they will be angry with me and the Government," he said.

"Later, they raised other issues such as the Damansara School, Vision School Concept and most recently the *Nanyang Siang Pau* takeover deal.

"They claim that the Government wants control of the Chinese dailies. Their ultimate aim is to incite hatred among the Chinese so that the community will not vote for the Barisan in the next general election in either 2003 or 2004."

He urged the people to be grateful for the nation's development and the peace and progress they had enjoyed over the years.