

# 'Hate campaigns rife'

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## PM accuses the Opposition of fanning racial issues to topple BN

By Christina Gurunathan

**PENANG, Fri:** The Opposition aims to instil hatred among the Chinese so that the community will reject the Barisan Nasional (BN) government in the next general election, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

"In Penang, after Lim Kit Siang's defeat in the 1999 general election, the DAP has been working diligently to garner the support of the Chinese community.

"So, they have decided to instil hatred of the government in them," said Mahathir, who met with the state BN leaders in Bukit Jambul yesterday.

In order to disunite the community, Mahathir said, the DAP has resorted to sensationalising issues pertaining to the community.

"The Opposition played up the Damansara school

and vision schools issues and the recent Nanyang deal. It said the government was trying to control the Chinese newspapers. These were all done to ensure that the government does not win in the 2004 or perhaps the 2003 general election.

"They will continue to fan this hatred towards the BN," he said, adding that the state Gerakan, MCA and PPP must not allow DAP to create such sentiments in the state.

While the Chinese are pursued by DAP, the Malays, he said, are being hounded by PAS.

"PAS is even feeding children with hatred towards Umno. They call me *maha zalim* (very cruel) and *maha firaun* (very cold-blooded). In addition, Shahnnon Ahmad has written a book entitled *Anjing* (dog). He wrote a book calling me a dog. They're all acting with hatred. If they were to become leaders, what is to happen to the country?"

Mahathir said.

To strengthen the BN coalition, Mahathir said, the component parties must get closer and cooperate with one another.

"But our struggle is not over. Everyone has a part to play and BN will continue to treat everyone fairly and maintain peace and order in the country," he told about 6,000 people who turned up.

Today, Mahathir met some 350 committee members of the Balik Pulau and Bayan Baru Umno divisions at a two-hour closed-door meeting.

The meeting discussed

problems faced by the Malay community and how to help them advance through education. Later, both divisions hosted a lunch for Mahathir.

Also present were Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and his wife Datin Seri Endon Mahmood, and Penang Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon.