

# 'BBM has split the Malays'

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## Rally did not foster unity, says Dr M

By Joniston Bangkuai

KOTA KINABALU, Mon. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the inception of the Barisan Bertindak Melayu or Malay Action Front has resulted in the Malays being further divided.

They were divided into Umno, Parti Keadilan Nasional, Pas and now the BBM, he said.

Dr Mahathir said he would not know if the BBM had any hidden agenda although it was quite obvious what it was up to.

"I really don't understand them because when they saw me before they said they wanted to hold this thing (the recent rally) to foster Malay unity," he told a Press conference before leaving for Kuala Lumpur after a two-day visit to Sabah.

He was asked about the criticisms hurled at Umno and government leaders by speakers at the BBM rally.

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, said instead of forging Malay unity, the BBM had caused a split among the Malays.

"Now instead of being divided into three, that is Umno, Keadilan and Pas, we now have four — Umno, Keadilan, Pas and BBM," he said.

The Prime Minister had said yesterday that Umno had nothing to do with the BBM although a permit was given to them to organise the rally.

On the Malay unity talks between Umno and Pas on Feb 19, Dr Mahathir said it had nothing to do with the possibility of Pas being admitted to the Barisan Nasional.

"We would only be talking about Malay unity and not about uniting Malay parties," he said.

On whether he was hopeful of a quick solution to the Perwaja Steel case now that the Swiss Government had agreed to co-operate in the investigation of the case, Dr Mahathir said he hoped the co-operation from the Swiss authorities would result in some action.

He was asked about a report that the Anti-Corruption Agency had made a breakthrough in its investigations involving Perwaja Steel as the Swiss Government had agreed

to co-operate in the probe into transactions of a Swiss bank account in which Perwaja Steel funds were allegedly deposited.

Stressing that the investigation was on the past management of Perwaja Steel, Dr Mahathir said the Government was making efforts to revive the company.

"As far as Perwaja is concerned this is a different issue ... we want to revive Perwaja and the Government has decided to find some ways of privatising it to a party that can manage it," he said.

On whether the Government had received any offers under the proposed privatisation, Dr Mahathir said there had been some interest shown by certain quarters but the Government had to maintain national interests.

The Prime Minister was also asked about a recent announcement by Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak that Malaysia would buy RM50 million worth of weapons from Pakistan.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia would buy weapons from any country as long as the price was reasonable.