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New Malay NGOs likely to do more harm, says Dr M

SHAH ALAM: Non-governmental organisations that claim to champion the rights of Islam and Malay can end up doing more harm than good, said former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad,

Referring to the newly-launched Jati, headed by former Selangor PAS commissioner Datuk Dr Hasan Ali, Dr Mahathir said he would have to thoroughly explain its purpose and objective.

"He needs to explain the objective of his NGO because I feel many such

groups are splitting Malays in the country. I personally do not like any group that attempts to do so," he said after delivering a speech on transforming the minds of researchers at Universiti Teknologi Mara yesterday.

On Tuesday, Dr Hasan had asked non-Muslims to join Jati in upholding Islam, Malays and the Malay Rulers but warned them that they would not enjoy the same rights and would not be allowed to vote.

Dr Mahathir also said those claim-

ing that Barisan Nasional was playing the race card to win votes from the Chinese and Indian communities were "racists" themselves.

"Everybody is racist in this country, especially those who claim they are not. However, these people who spread such accusations about Barisan are actually the ones who have vested interests," he said.

He was responding to criticisms that arose following the debate between MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek and DAP secretary-

general Lim Guan Eng on Saturday.

In his debate, Dr Chua had urged the Chinese community not to support DAP, claiming that a vote for the party would mean support for PAS' ideologies.

On reports that PAS president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang had announced that its candidates would have to pledge their *bai'ah* (oath of allegiance) not to stray from Islamic principles, Dr Mahathir said he was not qualified to make such a statement.