

UNITY THE KEY TO FREEDOM

'Easy to misjudge the importance of it'

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight that unity among the people was the best guarantee of independence.

It should not only be between the various races, but also between generations, the fortunate and the unfortunate, the employed and the unemployed, the intellectuals and the less educated, and between the States, he said.

"Without this wider scope of unity, the nation will be an easy target for its enemies," he warned Malaysians in a speech at a dinner in honour of 300 patriots who had struggled for independence.

Dr Mahathir said independence was won because the people, who had the disadvantage of not having arms and other resources, were united.

He noted with concern that some people today failed to appreciate the struggles of the past and did not cherish the independence that the country had enjoyed for 29 years.

"It is easy for the new generation to misjudge the importance of unity in preserving independence."

The Prime Minister called on the people to look around and see what had happened to countries which lost the independence that they had en-

joyed for many years to outside powers.

He reminded Malaysians that the loss of independence as experienced by the people of Kampuchea could happen here if Malaysians treated independence as the freedom to fight with one another.

He drew a grim picture of such a possibility and said if it happened the world could only watch, or at best, show some sympathy.

Citing Afghanistan as an example, Dr Mahathir asked how many sympathisers went to the battlefield to help the Afghans in their struggle to protect their land.