

Tapping cultural diversity for good

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KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. — The Prime Minister said today that the multiracial character of the nation should be turned to its advantage rather than kept as a persistent source of division.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said a combination of the best in each racial group and the avoidance of the worst particular traits could prove to be the country's richest resource.

He was speaking at a tea party in Sri Perdana for the benefit of 90 children chosen by Umno Youth in its *Rancangan Tunas Harapan* to foster the community spirit among the poorest in the country.

Dr Mahathir praised the programme in which the Youth wings of

the MCA and MIC also took part.

Such efforts at better communication will help reduce social unease and polarisation among the races.

He said the natural abilities of particular races — he mentioned the politically acute Malays, the business-minded Chinese and hard-working Indians — could add up to good effect.

"Each race has its good and bad attributes. If we avoid those that lead to failure and combine those which are successful, we will be able to make better use of the nation's wealth."

In many instances, the local populations will have themselves to blame for problems in society. For example, "if we were prepared to work harder, we would not face the the present problem of illegal immigration".