

# MAHATHIR: KNOW THY NEIGHBOUR

STAR 14 SEP 1987

Only by mixing around could they really learn to understand each other's culture and lifestyle and know what can or cannot be said or done to one another.

Dr Mahathir yesterday

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. — The Prime Minister has hit out at Malaysians who are indifferent and uncaring towards their neighbours.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the "situation in towns is such that neighbours not only do not know each other but are also unconcerned about it."

He regretted that the situation had persisted despite the Government's efforts to promote good neighbourliness.

He added that such efforts did not bring about the "desired result" because of the public's unsatisfactory response.

Dr Mahathir was speaking at the launching of a good neighbourliness campaign jointly organised by the National Unity Department and Public Bank at Bandar Tun Razak here today.

Also present were Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Encik Kasitah Gaddam and Public Bank president Tan Sri Teh Hong Piow.

Dr Mahathir said it was not uncommon to hear stories of how thieves were able to cart away the belongings from a house without the neighbours realising it.

"This happens because people no longer bother to make friends with their neighbours and to help each other.

"Maybe this is because people no longer realise the importance of good neighbourliness," he said.

He added: "Perhaps, we should think of how we

would feel if we are the victims instead."

Dr Mahathir also spoke on the need for Malaysians to be friendly with their neighbours regardless of one's race or religion.

He said the people should emphasise their similarities and common values rather than the differences in their cultures and lifestyles.

In this regard, the Prime Minister said a good way to promote neighbourliness and unity was through children who were born without prejudices.

"To them, there is no race

or culture. All they know is that they like to be friends with everyone their age," he said.

He urged parents to stop talking about racial differences in front of their children who would then find it easier to mix around.

"Only by mixing around could they really learn to understand each other's culture and lifestyle and know what can or cannot be said or done to one another," he said.

He also spoke highly of the traditional kampung

folk who he said were always friendly with each other and willing to help one another on any occasion, be it a wedding or a funeral.

Dr Mahathir said such practices should be revived in the villages and in towns because good neighbourliness could create a safer and happier environment.

He added: "Malaysia is able to progress because the people are peace-loving. The more peaceful the country is, the faster the development."