

Thanks to decisive Govt action: PM Country now more stable

NST 17 MAY 1988

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — The "climate of fear" pervading the country at the end of last year has now been replaced by growing confidence and positive development, **Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad** said today.

This, he added, was made possible by firm and decisive Government action.

The Prime Minister said the people should not criticise the Government as it had pulled the nation back from the brink of racial conflict.

"We must be thankful that we were able to take action to save the country. We must not forget how close we were to another racial conflict, which would have affected the nation's economic recovery.

"Let us not condemn indiscriminately an action which saved us all," he said in a Hari Raya message over RTM.

Dr Mahathir said the apprehension of the past has been eliminated but there were those who wished to cause racial conflict.

He also said the country's stability was achieved by nurturing feelings of brotherhood and interdependence among the people and not by chance.

Thrift, close family ties and a gradual improvement in the economy also helped to make Malaysia stable and resilient in the face of depressing economic conditions.

"This country has benefited from the economic improvement which began last year. Patience and our austerity campaign have produced results as we gradually and confidently tackled the problems brought about by the economic slowdown."

With the return of stability, foreign investments have doubled over last year. More people, including graduates, have found jobs.

To ensure a favourable investment climate, the Prime Minister advised workers not to be choosy about jobs. They must also stop giving the impression that they constantly create problems for employers.

Dr Mahathir told them not to be influenced by those who say they are being oppressed, or "we may forget that not too long ago we were unemployed."

He urged the people to use the occasion of

Hari Raya to get together and foster greater friendship and solidarity.

"Our society will not progress if family ties are not improved and strengthened."

The people are advised to take stock of their positions; they should feel fortunate they are living in an independent country.

He said this feeling of gratitude is felt particularly among the Malays because under colonial rule they were the most humiliated and backward.

"With independence, we can determine and safeguard our future. Certainly, we will not deliberately worsen our lot or weaken ourselves to the effect that our independence becomes meaningless."

However, Dr Mahathir said after 31 years of independence, some people have forgotten the benefits of Merdeka.

He noted that the seeds of disunity had been sown among the Muslims in the country and feared that these differences, if not resolved, could affect the unity of the *ummah*.

"Therefore, on this auspicious occasion, let us pledge to eliminate those elements that disunite us and work harder to strengthen the unity of the *ummah*."

Dr Mahathir also extended the people's appreciation to members of the Armed Forces and police, saying it was through their sacrifices that the people could celebrate Hari Raya in peace.