

Strive for unity, PM tells people

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KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. — Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad today called on the people to strengthen not only racial unity but also unity among members of each racial group.

The people should not be satisfied with what has been achieved so far but must continuously strive to be united in the true sense.

Opening the *Unity* exhibition at Muzeum Negara, the Prime Minister said the people should be grateful that they have been able to live in peace and understanding in a multi-racial and multi-religious society.

He said there was no major racial conflict in the country except for the May 13 tragedy in 1969 which had brought about a greater awareness of the importance of unity.

"With this awareness, we have strived to achieve unity and prevent a repeat of 1969," he said.

Dr Mahathir said a study of the nation's history showed that after 1969 the country's efforts to forge racial unity had been successful.

This, he said, was something that the people should be proud of.

"It is not an easy thing to achieve unity. Other countries with a multi-racial and multi-religious population have failed to achieve unity. This sometimes was the reason for racial riots."

The Prime Minister said although

the various races had differences of opinion, they were able to overcome such emotions with rational thinking.

However, he cautioned the people not to be satisfied with their achievements and urged them to work harder to ensure racial harmony.

"This is why the Government has always continued to emphasise the need for racial unity," he added.

He said he was confident that greater unity among the people would ensure a better future for them.

This was because the urge to unite was strong and would grow even stronger in face of a tragedy as evident during the Butterworth jetty tragedy when people helped each other irrespective of race.

Dr Mahathir also spoke of the need to promote intra-racial unity, saying that this was important to avoid any misunderstanding among the people of any racial group.

"When there is misunderstanding, we will be weak and this can lead to feelings of mistrust, oppression and fear. And this will certainly obstruct efforts to forge unity among the various races."

On the exhibition, he expressed the hope that the people would visit the museum so that they could understand the true meaning of unity.

The exhibition is being held in conjunction with National Day celebrations.