

# 'It's the basis of our existence' PM: Let us stand united

**KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. — The Prime Minister called on the people to work towards strengthening national unity and to avoid activities that will erode the cornerstone of the Malaysian nation.**

He said everything that Malaysia has achieved since its independence — political stability, economic growth, social progress and security — is based on unity.

"It is the basis of our existence," he said in his National Day address over Radio and Television Malaysia tonight.

To further emphasise the importance of unity, this year's National Day celebration has adopted last year's unity theme of *Bersatu* as this year's theme as well, he said.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad warned that the nation is going through a challenging era and would always face challenges within and outside the country.

"If we do not unite, we may be destroyed by our internal problems that may be whipped up and instigated by our enemies outside the country," he said, adding "our enemies may even use this to cripple the nation."

Dr Mahathir urged Malaysians to be on guard as "these possibilities may erode and threaten our independence as a nation."

"If we are complacent, we may be colonised again. This colonisation may not be in terms of territorial domination but can be in the form of economic or social colonialism."

Dr Mahathir cited how several countries are now dependent on foreign aid for survival and have to act according to the interest of the donor countries leaving the people with mere "puppet Governments."

In light of the danger from these challenges, he urged, Malaysians of all races to place a high va-

lue on the country's independence.

"Thirty two years of independence has allowed the Government to bring material and spiritual development to the people. But a lot more needs to be done."

Dr Mahathir said this theme was selected for the second consecutive year to demonstrate the Government's deep conviction to national unity.

He said many Malaysians would appreciate this theme especially those who went through hardship and dangerous times of the May 13, 1969 racial riots.

"Although we may want to forget this tragic day but we should not forget the lessons from this event. If we totally forget it, we may not take efforts to avoid a repetition of such events."

However, he was disappointed that young Malaysians who have not had the experience of the trauma of the 1969 racial riots seemed to have forgotten the lessons of this national tragedy.

"Therefore, the Government thinks it is appropriate that we constantly emphasise the importance of unity and solidarity among Malaysians," said Dr Mahathir.

He suggested the "unity" theme be incorporated into whatever activities carried out by schools, institutions of higher learning, Government agencies and all other quarters in the country.

He said unity was applicable in politics, economy, social, security, race relations and sports.

He added that for example, the country's success in the SEA Games was due to unity and the nationalistic spirit of Malaysians.

Dr Mahathir said Government policies like the New Economic Policy and the National Education Policy are aimed at further consolidating national unity.

"This is because glaring disparities in a society's economy, politics and social set-up can lead to disunity and result in riots. The gap between the rich and the poor, even within a homogeneous society, will usually lead to disunity and revolutions."