

Problems should not be used as excuses

# Renew drive for unity: PM

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**KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — The Prime Minister tonight called on Malaysians to promote co-operation and understanding in the new year and not to allow existing problems, to affect national unity.**

**Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad** said Malaysians should renew their drive and motivation to further improve co-operation and understanding among themselves.

In his New Year message over radio and television, Dr Mahathir said while it was true Malaysians faced several problems, these problems should not be used as an excuse not to co-operate and be united.

He said there were certain groups out to capitalise on these problems to aggravate the situation.

“We should remember that the intention of these groups is not to solve the problems but instead to worsen the situation by using the problems for their narrow political interests.

“We should also remember that we have successfully overcome past challenges through unity, understanding and co-operation in our cosmopolitan society.

“By maintaining unity, understanding and co-operation among ourselves, we can continue to achieve success in the political, economic, social and security sectors and enjoy these successes.”

Reviewing 1988, he said the year had seen recovery in all the sectors mentioned.

Undesirable matters had also been raised during the year but not seriously enough to cause chaos.

He also spoke of the need to strengthen the country's defences to face new challenges to national security.

He said these challenges could arise from the same sources but in different forms or manifestation.

Dr Mahathir said the constitution guaranteed a way of life based on the values of moderation, tolerance and mutual understanding within a society comprising various races, cultures, religions and languages.

He called on all Malaysians to be more aware of the sensitivities of others to ensure that the present peaceful way of life could be maintained.

The political situation in the country was also getting more stable while the economy was growing at a fast pace.

“The tension ‘seen at the end of 1987 has been absent in 1988 as the various races are living in peace and harmony.”

The rehabilitation of Umno had given Malaysians and foreign investors confidence in the stability of the country.

“It is true the rehabilitation has not been fully

# Beware of racial politics: PM

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achieved but a responsible **rakyat** which loves peace and which **loves** the country will ensure that all problems can be overcome."

He said the Government was glad that racial politics in 1988 was not as serious as during one or two years back.

It was easy for a party or a politician to raise racial sentiments, he said, as various issues could be used for this purpose.

"Let us be thankful that racial politics is on the decline. Every strata of society must **be** aware of the dangers **of** this form of politics.

"The Government is willing to be more liberal but if there are signs that this attitude has been **misinterpreted**, the Government will not hesitate to carry out its responsibilities."

On privatisation, he said it

would-be continued as efficiency and quality had been improved in Government services which had been privatised.

He said heavy industry projects like the national car project had begun to show good returns.

"The year has also shown that each policy needed time to prove its soundness. The people, especially intellectuals, should adopt a more positive attitude towards such projects or policies.

"Delays in the implementation of a project due to disturbances will only increase costs and affect the **rakyat**. Attention should be given to efforts to overcome problems and not to those that obstruct such efforts.

"The success of various projects and Government policies in 1988 is proof that the Government is not as wrong as alleged by several quarters."

Dr Mahathir called on the **people** to be positive and confident that Malaysia would achieve **greater** success in 1989.

"We will be the host to the Sea Games and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in 1989. This is our opportunity to uplift national honour in the eyes of the world."

He reminded the people of the need to continue improving productivity .

**On dadah**, Dr Mahathir who is also the Home Minister, warned traffickers not to think they could escape arrest. "It may be too late to regret when the death sentence is pronounced."

Expressing concern over the mortality rate on Malaysian roads, he appealed to motorists to make it a New Year resolution to drive **carefully**.