

PREVENTIVE LAWS STAY

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KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. — The Internal Security Act and other related laws will be retained until the people learn to check themselves from activities that pose a threat to national security, **Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad** said tonight.

These preventive laws would continue to be used so long as racial, religious and other such issues had the potential to undermine the country, he said.

"Our experience and that of other countries has shown how dire the consequences can be if racial and religious issues are not monitored and regulated," said the Prime Minister.

The Government wanted to prevent occurrences that could lead to

loss of life and destruction of property, he said when launching the 15th anniversary celebrations of the Rukun Tetangga at the Putra World Trade Centre here.

Dr Mahathir said the May 13 incident was a lesson to everyone.

"Prevention is better than cure," he said, adding that this was borne out in October 1987 when the Government defused what would have been an explosive situation by taking firm action under the ISA.

The Prime Minister said the people needed a common vision of the nation they wanted to build to achieve unity.

Saying that the process of nation-building was a long one, he added that until the country reached a level of unity that would enable it to cope with all threats, national solidarity would remain the Government's primary consideration.

This objective would be given priority in the drawing up of policies in all areas to help enhance unity among the people, he said.

Dr Mahathir said what had been achieved so far came from the co-operation between the Government and the people.

This would not have been possible if the people had not wanted unity and had not appreciated the need for moderation, tolerance, and respect for the rights and sensitivities of others, he added.

Dr Mahathir described religion and belief as another important aspect relating to unity.

He said that although Islam was the official religion Malaysians of other faiths enjoyed religious freedom.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Home Minister, said nation-building in the Malaysian context included 'territorial

integration."

He said that integration among peninsula states was not a major problem as the people had known one another for a long time.

The integration that needed greater attention was between the peninsula and Sabah and Sarawak, he said.

He added that the Federal Government and state authorities had taken various steps to promote this integration but such a process could not be achieved in a short time.

The Government would pursue this goal until it was achieved, he said.

Dr Mahathir said that in the 90s and beyond, "we will continue to concentrate on nation-building... there will be challenges, but if we are committed, have the same objectives and vision, and uphold the Constitution and Rukunegara, an even stronger Malaysia will emerge."