

# PM: Have close ties just like an extended family

AST 12 NOV 1990

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. — Malaysians should have close and cordial ties like members of an extended family working for peace and stability, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said ties between Malaysians of various races were no less important than that of a normal family unit.

"In view of this, it is important that act as one big family of Malaysians," he said when launching National Family Day 1990 at the Football Stadium in Bandar Tun Razak.

Dr Mahathir said the family concept encompassed a wide scope because of the country's multi-racial character which required different races to live together in harmony.

"Therefore, we should not reject the concept of a family relationship,

even if it is with those of different races."

The Prime Minister said inter-marriages should be accepted by Malaysians as long as they did not go against the customs and religious beliefs of the people.

He said Malaysians should not sever links with relatives of different races. "This does not represent Government policy but is my own view as I have family members who are not of my own race but I accept them as members of an extended family," he said.

On National Family Day, he said it held special meaning as the family unit was the basis of Malaysian society.

"National Family Day is being observed to enable us to remember the importance of the family as a

vital institution in society," he added.

The Prime Minister said the Government was giving serious attention to efforts to strengthen and maintain the cohesion of the family unit.

This was to prevent a repetition of the situation in some Western countries where the family unit was being broken up.

He said there signs of a rift among Malaysian families, especially among the urban people and the younger generation.

He attributed this to migration, marriage and job commitments.

"Some of our youths are becoming less responsible. The bright lights of the city have caused many to emigrate to the city looking for

jobs, leaving their parents behind.

"When they get married, they stay in their own house instead of with their parents or in-laws.

"This will eventually lead to segregation like what is commonly seen in Western countries.

"In these countries, the elderly are normally sent to old folks home instead of being looked after by their children.

"They become the responsibility of the State instead of their children.

"The youths, on the other hand, prefer to live on their own, free from parental control. As a result, they become wild and are easily trapped into taking drugs, liquor or committing crime."

Dr Mahathir said if the family institution was destroyed, progress would have no meaning.