

Dr M: We don't need foreign tips on unity

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Malaysians were capable of strengthening national unity and integration, but the people needed to be wary of foreigners who claimed to know the country's problems better, and how they could be overcome.

Foreigners may claim to know the nation's problems and how to overcome them, but this is not so because they are incapable of solving the problems in their own countries, the Prime Minister said.

"This country has no need for such people," Dr Mahathir said today when launching the first meeting of the National Unity Advisory panel for this year.

The Prime Minister said Malaysia had achieved tremendous success in integration and unity programmes, which had, to a great extent, created a Malaysian identity,

especially among the younger generation.

He said the conditions in some other countries were worse and there was discrimination against certain groups of people.

Dr Mahathir said: "Therefore let us not be influenced by the claims of these foreigners who say that our efforts at racial integration and unity will fail.

"We are more knowledgeable of our problems. We have proved that our policies and principles are very successful in overcoming the problems and imbalances that exist in our plural society.

"What is important is for us to reduce emotional pressure. Instead, we should be moderate and be guided by rational thinking when resolving our problems," the Prime Minister told the 32-member advisory panel.

The panel is headed by National Unity and Social

Development Minister Datuk Napsiah Omar.

Dr Mahathir said an ideal environment for unity was not available anywhere in the world.

"If the ideal situation is available, then there is no need for us to continue to work towards unity because unity would already exist.

"The country needs the panel because we are not perfect, and may never be perfect. In such situation, we need advice and inputs to further strengthen our unity," the Prime Minister said.

He said the creation of a united Malaysian society was one of the main challenges in the Government's vision of attaining the status of a developed country by the year 2020.

"Without unity and harmony among the various

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National culture being cultivated, says Dr M

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communities we will not be able to create a conducive political, social and economic climate that can lead Malaysia to a higher level of development.

"As such, unity is vital in our attempt to be a developed country," he said.

Expanding his views on the subject, the Prime Minister said the unity he envisaged was the one where Malaysians of all races and religions develop a strong sense of oneness, with an identity that surpassed their racial and State identities.

"The unity being promoted is intended to create a society where people of different races, origins, cultural backgrounds and religions prosper in a peaceful environment made possible by close understanding and mutual respect and a great

of tolerance.

"This will be further enhanced by the people's willingness to give and take and discuss their problems in the spirit of national interests."

He said that after 34 years of independence, the majority of Malaysian citizens were born in this country and therefore the issue of loyalty should not be questioned.

"Unlike in pre-independence days where children went through different educational systems, the children of today are going through a system which will promote greater unity and harmony among all Malaysians.

"A Malaysian culture is being cultivated with the use of Bahasa Malaysia as the national language in the economic, political and social fields," he said.