

Duty of all to ensure country enjoys peace and stability, says Dr Mahathir

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and
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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — All Malaysians have a duty to ensure that there is continued stability, peace and prosperity so that the country can realise its objective of becoming industrialised, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight.

He said Malaysians of different religious and cultural backgrounds had always been sensitive to practices of the various religions in the country.

"Malaysia is a stable country which we should all be proud as Malaysians are able to move around freely and sleep comfortably with-

out any fear.

"Bosnia-Herzegovina and some other countries have a situation where their citizens fear to leave their homes," he said when addressing the 10th anniversary celebrations of the Malaysian Consultative Council for Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and Sikhism at Kolej Damansara Utama in Damansara Utama.

The Prime Minister said that in Malaysia the Malays could visit Chinese populated areas without fear and the people were allowed to practise their respective faiths.

Similarly, he said, the Chinese could go and live in the kampungs without having to worry.

He said that in Malaysia the various communities

with different religious backgrounds realised that differences could be sorted out through discussion and not through violence, as was being experienced in several countries in the world.

"I pray and hope that the people will continue to live together and build the nation," he said.

He said Malaysia was one of the few countries where there was a council for different religions.

He said Malaysians from different religious backgrounds could sit at one table and eat together.

"Another remarkable phenomenon is that non-Muslims even join Muslims who break their at the various hotels which provide special food for the occa-

sion.

"You cannot find Muslims breaking fast with non-Muslims in other countries," he said.

Dr Mahathir added that Islam stated clearly that Muslims must not ridicule the manner in which followers of other religions pray.

"If we ridicule others, they will also ridicule us," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the Government would examine the contents of a memorandum submitted to him tonight by the council.

The president of the council, Bishop Dennis C. Dutton, in his address, said the memorandum contained important matters, such as religious lessons for non-Muslim pupils, which it

wished to bring to the Government's attention.

Dutton expressed confidence that under the leadership of Dr Mahathir, Malaysians could look forward to continued progress and the building of a just and caring society.

He added that the peace prevalent in Malaysia was a credit to its citizens and the Government and urged Malaysians not to take it for granted.

He also thanked Dr Mahathir for attending the dinner as it demonstrated respect for and goodwill towards all religious communities in the country. Also present was Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik and Health Minister Datuk Lee Kim Sai.