

Dr Mahathir: We are on the right track to creating caring society

By Vijayan Menon and Raja Emylia

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. -- Malaysia has already been able to achieve the caring society concept to a certain extent, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said this was evident from the spontaneous and generous response to charitable causes by Malaysians.

"Many do not hesitate to donate millions of ringgit for a noble cause and this reflects the caring spirit. This is a good sign and fostering this spirit of giving is also the aim of the Government.

"However, we have to ensure that this spirit prevails. As long as we have this spirit we will be a stable and peaceful society," he said at a tea reception hosted for disabled artistes as well as donors who have contributed to the Disabled Arts Fund at Hotel Istana here.

Dr Mahathir said every-

one should feel indebted to society.

"We should remember that everything we own is only temporary. We are merely guardians of whatever property we may have accumulated in this world. The wealth does not belong to us.

"We are merely given charge of it and should administer it in such a way that it benefits society. When society requires our help, we must be willing to readily contribute."

Dr Mahathir said everyone in the world was disabled one way or another.

"For instance, if one does not have the right attitude or behaviour or has other shortcomings, one is disabled to that extent."

However, he said, physically disabled people have faculties which were more developed than normal people.

"We should not focus on their shortcomings but instead capitalise on their

sharper faculties so that they can contribute to society."

Dr Mahathir said Malaysians should be grateful that the country was considered developed among developing nations and enjoyed peace, stability and prosperity.

"Although we are prosperous we are still generous and willing to help those who are underprivileged."

Dr Mahathir and his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali were also entertained to dances and songs by artistes from the Selangor School for the Deaf, Penang Special Education School and the Cheras Rehabilitation Centre for the Disabled.

Songs belted by blind singer Alfred Ho was one of the highlights of the evening.

Also present were National Unity and Social Development Minister Datuk Napsiah Omar and her deputy Datuk Alex Lee.