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Mahathir-harvest
PRESERVE RACIAL HARMONY, SAYS MAHATHIR

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KOTA KINABALU, May 31 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today urged the people to preserve racial harmony, saying fights and riots would only bring loss to all.

He said the riots and killings taking place in many countries would only cause those nations to remain backward and be used by others, particularly those selling arms.

"All quarters will suffer loss when there are fights and riots. They will not bring any good to anyone, be they in government or outside the government," he said when closing the "Pesta Kaamatan" (Harvest Festival) at the Dewan Hongkod Koisaan in Penampang near here.

"Pesta Kaamatan" is observed for a month every May to signal the end of the harvest in Sabah, particularly by the Kadazan/Dusun community.

Dr Mahathir said he was happy that Malaysians are able to preserve harmony through the celebration of various festivals though they are of various cultures and religions. -- more

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He cited examples of riots and mass killings in several countries, saying some people were even prepared to kill their neighbours regardless whether they were adults or children.

The prime minister said developed countries could no longer be depended upon to resolve racial strife in any country.

"Previously, developed countries wanted to help resolve the strife by sending their troops but now we can no longer trust any of the developed countries which have all along talked of human rights.

"We cannot look for help from outside when there are riots. When there are riots, they flee. They no longer give protection," he said. -- more

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Dr Mahathir said he was happy that the people in Sabah and Sarawak, comprising the various races, were living in harmony.

"It does not matter if there is a small degree of differences in opinion. We have our rights because we practise democracy," he said.

He said all differences in opinion and ideology should be resolved amicably through discussion or through voting in a general election.

The prime minister praised the attitude of Kadazan students from Sabah who had called at his residence in Kuala Lumpur for the Hari Raya Puasa "open house".

"This is our style. We often call on each other to strengthen relations regardless of our cultural and religious backgrounds," he said.

Dr Mahathir extended greetings to the Kadazan community in Sabah in conjunction with the "Pesta Kaamatan" and said he hoped that such festivals would strengthen relations among the communities in the state.

The wife of the prime minister, Datuk Seri Datin Paduka Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, crowned the winner of the festival beauty queen contest.

Dr Mahathir and Dr Siti Hasmah then returned to Kuala Lumpur. --

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