

# Don't undermine national unity, says Dr M

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JITRA, Thurs. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today urged all quarters, including political parties, not to create problems which could jeopardise unity among the people.

He said he was saddened by the existence of destructive politics which split the Muslims.

Dr Mahathir said the habit of labelling others un-Islamic should be stopped.

"Politics should not be used to segregate or divide the Muslims. It should be used to save Muslims from their foes," he said when laying the foundation stone of the RM626,000 Lahar mosque here.

Among the VIPs present were his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, Menteri Besar Tan Sri Osman Aroff, Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Abdul Hamid Othman and State Executive Councillors.

Dr Mahathir reminded the people of the history of the Philippines which at one time was governed by Muslims until the Spanish conquest.

"Manila was led by a sultan until the colonialists took over the country and forced the Muslims to renounce their religion and embrace Christianity," he said, adding that the Muslims in the Philippines were then known as "Moros".

He said Muslims in the country should be grateful that they did not suffer a similar fate during the British rule.

"We had made known to the British that they should not meddle in our religion and customs and that is why we are still Muslims.

"Therefore, we should not create problems now that can undermine our unity."

Dr Mahathir said the Government had been striving to improve the socio-economic standard of the people, besides strengthening Islam.

He said today's ceremony was a testimony of the Government's commitment to

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# Maintain rapport, Lahar Muslims urged

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realising these aspirations.

"Unlike other Muslim countries which are besieged with internal problems, Muslims in Malaysia have the luxury of building mosques," he said, citing the upheavals in Somalia and Bosnia-Herzegovina as examples.

Dr Mahathir said the mosque was built for the benefit of every Muslim in Mukim Lahar regardless of their political affiliation.

In a lighter vein, the Prime Minister thanked Pas supporters for raising the party's flag to "welcome" him at the ceremony.

"I asked the Menteri Besar why we did not put up our flags and he said that this is a religious function."

He said Muslims in the area should maintain their close rapport despite belonging to different political parties.

Dr Mahathir also touched on the allegation by the Opposition that he had sold a piece of land at a high price for the construction of his own memorial.

He reiterated his call to the Opposition to substantiate their claims that he had sold the land at RM70 per sq foot for that purpose.

"Memorials are only for the dead. If that allegation is true, I could have earned millions of ringgit.

"I had two relong of land at Bukit Tinggi (in Jitra) which I owned 20 years ago. The land was acquired to build a road and I was compensated RM8,000, giving me a profit of a mere RM3,000.

"Furnish the proof. There is no point in telling lies.

"If something is true, just admit it. Don't keep on denying it (the truth) ... tell the truth, don't lie," said Dr Mahathir, adding that he was not pinpointing anyone.

He repeated his call to the people to be grateful for the good life they were now enjoying.

After the foundation stone-laying ceremony, Dr Siti Hasmah gave away scholarships to 14 pupils and prayer mats to the Lahar mosque.