

'We must always maintain racial harmony'

JITRA, Thurs. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight Malaysians must always maintain racial harmony to ensure continued prosperity for the nation.

He said with greater understanding and stronger ties among the races, the people could work together and contribute towards nation building.

"With no ill-feelings among the people of the various races and religious beliefs, the country will always be progressive unlike some countries which are troubled by racial clashes," he said.

"Our people always help each other and are sensitive to each others' needs. It is through this kind of understanding that we have managed to maintain racial harmony and become prosperous," he said at a dinner organised by the Kubang Pasu Barisan Nasional Youth at the Institut Perguruan Darul Aman here.

Accompanying Dr Mahathir was his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali. Menteri Besar Tan Sri Osman Aroff and Kubang Pasu Umno Youth chief Mohd Johari Baharom were among 2,000 members of the coalition at the dinner.

The Prime Minister said Malaysia's brand of co-operation among the people, as advocated by the Barisan Nasional, was very special.

"We have in fact invited leaders of South Africa, for instance, to learn about our brand of co-operation and it seems that they must have introduced some of it to their people and it must have worked for them because they are no longer fighting among themselves.

"In a way, we should be proud that others, who have had a long history of violence in their country, are no longer fighting but are beginning to foster closer relations among themselves to rebuild their nation," he said.

The Prime Minister also reminded the people to stand guard against the Opposition's tactics in trying to cause a rift among Muslims and between Muslims and non-Muslims.

"Pas, for instance, exists merely to gain voters' support. They claim to be Islamic but encourage their members to indiscriminately discredit others.

"Pas also comprises fanatics who are willing to refute the Quran and idolise their leaders," he said.

Earlier, Osman called on the people to reject the Opposition and continue to support the Barisan Nasional because of its proven track record.

He said it was only through the Barisan Nasional that the people, regardless of their races, religious beliefs or political affiliations, could enjoy the present pace of economic growth and racial harmony.

The Menteri Besar also said the people of Kubang Pasu wanted Dr Mahathir to continue serving them.

"The people still need Dr Mahathir and have pledged to give undivided support to him in the coming general election," he said.

His statement came in the light of talk that Dr Mahathir would stand in the newly-created Langkawi parliamentary seat. However, he has said he would continue to lead Kubang Pasu as long as his services were needed.

He left for Kuala Lumpur tonight.