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Mahathir - peace

PEACE, RACIAL HARMONY IN MALAYSIA EXTRAORDINARY - DR MAHATHIR

SUNGAI PETANI, March 18 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today racial harmony and peace in Malaysia is something extraordinary with no comparison elsewhere in the world.

The Prime Minister said this situation should be considered a blessing and should be valued and preserved if Malaysians wished to continue living in peace and harmony and aspired for continuous prosperity.

"Malaysia can take pride ...we don't face problems even though the people are of different races and religions. However at times we take this situation for granted," he said when launching the Kedah level "Gerak Mesra" programme organised by the Information Ministry at the Mara Skills Institute.

Dr Mahathir pointed out the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina where the people were of the same race and speak the same language but were fighting against each other because they followed different religions.

They did not trust each other and were living in fear, he said.

He said Malaysians who were of various descent, spoke in various languages and practised different religions but were able to live in peace and harmony and in full cordiality without being suspicious of each other.

"However we sometimes forget to value this blessing and only come to think of this when faced with difficulties just like the person who falls sick and only then he realises the value of preserving good health," he said.

"Healthy people don't value their good health...don't care about their health...they smoke, they over eat. Health is a blessing." he said.

"When we are sick, then we realise the importance of good health.. when we fall sick we consider it a misfortune...a disaster."

"Dr Mahathir said Malaysia is peaceful and the people are living in harmony because we are careful and don't raise matters which can hurt the feelings of other races," he said.

"We have to be careful always..think about the racial problem in Malaysia," he said.

"As individuals, we forget ourselves and take the wrong step and give way to our emotions and do things which hurt the feelings of other people," the Prime Minister said.

Towards this end, the government had launched the "Gerak Mesra" programme to remind the people of the importance of tolerance and good relations among the people.

He said it was the responsibility of the elected government to remind people about these matters to ensure that the country continued to prosper and there was racial harmony.

Parents should nurture such feelings of tolerance and goodwill in their children at home, Dr Mahathir said.

He said a happy family would create a generation with high ideals and cordial relations within the family would spill into society as a whole.

Gerak Mesra is a programme aimed at creating a caring society with a noble heart.

It was also to create a society which put the society's interests above personal interests.

Dr Mahathir also opened the Dewan Mesra Perdana at the institute before witnessing the various Gerak Mesra programmes.

Some 5,000 joined the programme. Kedah Menteri Besar Tan Sri Haji Osman

Aroff and Health Minister Datuk Chua Jui Meng were among the dignitaries present. -- BERNAMA

MFJ AAM