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Inter-racial understanding vital

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Malaysians are able to live as harmoniously as they do now because they make efforts to understand each other, Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Sanusi Junid said tonight.

He said ethnic relationships, particularly between Malays and Chinese, had changed dramatically since the 1960s, especially in terms of how familiar and comfortable they were with each other.

"Today, 28 years ago, we murdered each other," he told guests at a dinner in his honour.

"It was a traumatic experience from which we have learnt a lot."

Sanusi said realisation and efforts by the country's leaders, particularly Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, had gone a long way in eradicating economically structured racial barriers left by the British.

The dinner at Hotel Istana tonight was organised by a multi-racial group of community leaders and businessmen to commemorate Sanusi being awarded a professorship by the Nanjing University of China last December.

Also present were Sanusi's wife Datin Seri Nila Inangda Manyam Keumala, Kerjaya Binaan executive chairman Datuk Kassim Maon, who is the dinner's organising committee chairman, and Tun Ghafar Baba.

Speaking on behalf of the Chinese community was Tan Sri Ngan Ching Wen, honorary president of the Kuala Lumpur and Selangor Chinese Chamber of Commerce.

Sanusi received the professorship during a five-day official visit to China last December in a ceremony at Nanjing University's Gulou campus.

He was the first Malaysian to receive the title since the university began awarding it to foreign scholars in 1980.

Among past recipients were five Nobel Prize winners, including Prof I. Prigogine, the Nobel Prize winner in Physics.

Major decisions from the trip to China - Sanusi's most successful since he became Menteri Besar of Kedah - included an agreement in principle between the State Government and Nanjing University to set up a Malaysia-China Studies Centre with exchange of students.

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