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`Practise moderation and discard extremism'

KOTA KINABALU, Sat. - Stressing the importance of tolerance in a multi-racial society, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today advised the people to continue to practise moderation and to discard extremism.

The Prime Minister said Malaysians should be grateful because despite its multi-racial composition, there were no racial conflicts.

"We are not extremist ... we are rational people ... we are used to living with people of other races, faith and languages," he said when opening the ninth annual congress of the Liberal Democratic Party.

"Those who come here cannot understand how Malaysians who do not speak the same language, do not profess the same religion and do not have the same culture can live together harmoniously."

He cautioned the people on the dangers of intolerance and extremism, citing incidents in some countries which had caused civil wars and tension.

"In some countries, people are so intolerant that they fight over some minor differences."

The prevailing tolerance among Malaysians is to a large extent due to sensitivity to one another's beliefs and culture.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Barisan Nasional chairman, said BN component parties should remember the importance of tolerance among themselves.

He said the BN had striven to ensure that all communities, irrespective of their race and religion, were represented in the Federal and State Government.

Dr Mahathir said all communities, including the minor ones, were given a role in the BN Government.

"There may be those who are not represented in the Cabinet but are represented at other levels as we want to accommodate all the races."

Dr Mahathir said the appointment of LDP president Datuk Chong Kah Kiat to the Federal Cabinet demonstrated the BN's desire for all its components to be represented in the Government.

"Datuk Chong's presence in the Federal Cabinet has enabled him to voice problems faced by the people, especially members of his party."

He said Chong had also played a significant role in promoting ties between Sabah and the Federal Government.

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