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Exercise way to better discipline (HL)

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today urged the people to exercise regularly as it could help one keep his or her emotions and feelings under control.

The Prime Minister said exercise could also improve self-discipline and values vital towards the creation of a stable and prosperous nation - one capable of protecting and defending its sovereignty and independence.

Stressing the importance of keeping emotions under control - an essential element towards ensuring peace and harmony - Dr Mahathir said there was peace and stability in the country today because the people were disciplined and respected the law.

Addressing a gathering of some 5,000 people participating in a mammoth traditional Chinese exercise at Dataran Merdeka, the Prime Minister said one of the best ways to keep one's emotion under check was to perform exercises like taiji, waitankung and neitankung.

"Malaysians can be proud of themselves as they not only realise the need to adhere to the rule of law but have also put it into practice."

Dr Mahathir said this was unlike some quarters who liked to talk about the rule of law but at the same time, participated in activities which contravened the laws like demonstrating.

"The majority of Malaysians do not act this way. So, we can say that we are the ones who are actually practising the rule of law."

The event, themed Senaman Raksasa Berjiwa Patriotik, was jointly organised by the MCA, the Malaysian Waitankung and Neitankung Association and the Malaysian Federation Taiji Qi Gong 18 Forms, to promote patriotism.

Since its inception in 1981, the Waitankung and Neitankung Association has attracted some 230,000 enthusiasts, including the non-Chinese.

Waitankung originated in China but was brought into Malaysia from Taiwan by a Chinese Muslim Chang Chih-tung.

Despite Malaysia's multi-racial society, Dr Mahathir said the people had been able to live in peace and harmony through tolerance of each other's cultures, languages and lifestyles.

"This is why we continue to enjoy peace and prosperity. For example, the Chinese culture in Malaysia is still strong but I believe it has to some extent taken an approach to suit the racial composition."

Dr Mahathir said the ability to do this was healthy for unity and peace.

Praising the MCA for holding campaigns to promote loyalty to the country, he said such activities could help create a disciplined society.

It was remarkable that the activities were not confined to only MCA members but also involved the Chinese community and other races, he said.

"We need regulations and laws to ensure the country continues to be peaceful and developed. The laws will be useful if we abide by them ... but if we have no respect for them, the laws will be useless."

Dr Mahathir said in some multi-racial countries, clashes had occurred as relations among the people deteriorated.

"But in Malaysia, despite attempts to copy such unhealthy practices like demonstrating in the streets, the majority of Malaysians choose to observe the laws and live in peace."

The Prime Minister said Malaysia did not succumb to others easily although there were attempts to force it to bow to certain foreign agencies whose objective was to weaken the country further.

"This has failed because the rakyat are loyal and disciplined."

Dr Mahathir said it could not be denied that the Chinese community, with its ability in the fields of trade and industry, had contributed to the economy remaining sound although the ringgit had depreciated and the share market had declined.

Among those present were Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, MCA president and Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, his wife Datin Seri Ena Ling, Human Resources Minister Datuk Lim Ah Lek and senior MCA leaders.

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