

Be sensitive to others' culture, students told

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This will enable all the races to co-exist without problems, says PM

By **R. Manirajan**

manirajan@thesundaily.com

PUTRAJAYA, Wed: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that students must be sensitive to the culture and customs of other races in order to preserve peace in the country.

"Malays must be sensitive towards Chinese people's culture and customs, the Chinese must be sensitive to the Malays' and Indians' culture and customs and vice-versa," he said.

By doing so, no one will upset the feelings of people from other races and society can co-exist without any problems so that development will continue.

These values must be taught in school so that peace can be maintained without racial riots and civil unrest, he added.

Mahathir said it is important for teachers to instill these noble values in their students so that they will have the right attitude when they become future leaders.

He was speaking to about 500 students at the launch of the "Love Malaysia Programme" at the Putraraya 1 Secondary School, which is a smart school.

The programme is an initiative of the Information and Education ministries.

He said students must learn to love their country as they were born and raised here and will inherit the land.

"We must love our country like how we love our house and family, if not who else will love our country, it's ours and not others' and we must preserve it," the prime minister said.

In a country which is multi-racial, he said all the races are Malaysian citizens, and "they all own this country".

"It is our responsibility to care for, build and develop the country, and defend it for the sake of our children and grandchildren," he said.

In order to safeguard and manage the country, there is a need to acquire the necessary abilities.

He said that is why the government has set up new schools with training centres and other facilities for the new generation of students and teachers.

Later, at a dialogue session with students, one of them asked him what it takes to be leader in the globalisation era.

Mahathir said they will require discipline, ability to

control one's desires, and knowledge.

Giving an example, he said he was only a doctor who can prescribe medicine to his patients, but after becoming a leader he had to learn many things including the economy.

Another student asked why the smart schools are built only in Kuala Lumpur and not in rural areas.

Mahathir said this was due to lack of funds and the government can only have 90 such schools at the moment.