

Govt to do more for the poor

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KUALA LUMPUR The Government will concentrate more on improving the lives of the poor in the country Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said here last night

He said the clashes and other public disturbances such as the one that had occurred in Kampung Medan were caused by social problems among some segments of the society

They were not just caused by racial sentiments Dr Mahathir said in his speech at the 36th anniversary dinner of Malaysia Hindu Sangam here

He said although statistics showed that the poverty rate in Malaysia was low the high cost of living in cities had created the urban poor

We know such incidents had occurred in an area where the people are very poor and poor people are often easily stirred to violence

We will therefore take action to relieve such situations and overcome the inadequacies that you find in squatter areas and the poorer areas of the city and all over the country he said

Among those who attended the dinner were MIC president Datuk Seri S Samy Vellu and other dignitaries

Dr Mahathir said the country was fortunate to have experienced very few racial clashes adding that it was difficult to maintain peace in a multi cultural society

He added differences be

tween the races should be settled through negotiations and meeting each other to iron out any thorny issues

Dr Mahathir said the incidents which occurred in Kampung Medan were caused by a small misunderstanding

However he added some

people became involved even though they were not from anywhere near where the first incident had occurred

Dr Mahathir said the people should be grateful that the clashes were prevented from spreading adding that Malaysians were well known for

their tolerance

This kind of tolerance is not usually found in other multi religious and multi racial societies he added

Earlier in his welcoming speech Malaysia Hindu Sangam (MHS) president A Vaithilingam applauded the

government for its role in containing the disturbances in Kampung Medan recently

He said MHS would embark on a plan to combat social ills among the younger generation and asked the government for funds to launch the project