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Remain united, PM tells Kampung Medan folk

PETALING JAYA, Thurs: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has urged residents of Kampung Medan and the surrounding areas not to be taken in by rumour-mongers but to stay united.

The prime minister, who made a surprise visit to the squatter colony this evening, reminded the residents that Malaysia is a unique country where various races have lived in peace and harmony since independence.

Malaysians should continue to foster good relationships regardless of race and religion, he told some 1,000 residents of Kampung Medan, where gang clashes erupted three weeks ago.

Mahathir apologised for the delay in his visit, saying that he has been monitoring the situation closely.

He said countries such as Bosnia and Yugoslavia had experienced racial disharmony which resulted in pain and loss.

"If we continue to fight among ourselves, we will only find ourselves at the losing end," he said.

The prime minister also reminded the residents to be wary of negative elements which could damage the peace and harmony enjoyed so far.

On the recent clashes in settlements off Old Klang Road, Mahathir said he believed that the residents were not directly involved but were being instigated by some bad hats.

He said the police have been carrying out their duties well contrary to what was reported by the foreign

media.

"They have accused our police force of being brutal and ruthless but they have always used minimal force in carrying out their duties," he said.

Mahathir arrived in a four-wheel drive at about 6pm at a newly-built police beat base in Kampung Penaga Jaya accompanied by

his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah.

Also present were Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mohamad Khir Toyo, Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Norian Mai, and state police chief Datuk Nik Ismail Yusoff.

Later, when visiting the KTM Kampung Lindungan Tambahan longhouse area,

Mahathir advised the residents to live in peace and harmony.

He assured the Indian residents that MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu had briefed him on the problems they are facing.

"I hope everyone will give their cooperation and move once the low-cost houses are completed," he said.

Norian, in his speech before the prime minister's arrival at the settlement, promised the residents that the police will remain in the area.

About 1,000 personnel from the General Operations Force (GOF) and Federal Reserve Unit (FRU) currently patrol the settlements, which house 7,000 squatters.