

BE TOLERANT

STAR 14 MAY 2001

Resolve religious disputes in peaceful manner, says PM

By IZATUN SHARI

PETALING JAYA: Malaysians have been reminded not to act according to individualistic religious sentiments when dealing with matters affecting people of different faiths.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad urged the people to remain calm when faced with religious misunderstanding and refer to the Government to find the best ways to resolve them.

"Sometimes, certain things

acting on individual basis.

"Other parties should try to resolve the problems in a peaceful manner and not act on individual basis. Thus, our country will remain peaceful."

The Prime Minister said religious tolerance and respect among followers of different religions were vital to avoid strife.

"When there is no religious tolerance, relations among different religious followers will be strained and it may lead to misunderstanding,

■ States in a bind over 'decree' – Page 2

may offend followers of different religions. When this happens, I appeal to these people to refer the matter to the Government.

"It is better for us to find a fair way of resolving the matter rather than allowing it to be dealt in a disorderly manner," he said in his speech at a Wesak Day open house organised by the Buddhist Association of Malaysia at the Petaling Jaya Civic Centre.

Dr Mahathir said when a religious dispute occurred, other related parties should not worsen the situation by

animosity and even acrimony.

"When they do not show respect for one another, there may be a long period of religious tension. That is why it is difficult to stop fights and riots like in Northern Ireland, Palestine and other countries."

He said Malaysians must continue with the practice of participating in the special occasions of different religious followers.

"That way, we will be able to establish close relations among people of different faiths."