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Mahathir-Harmony

PRESERVE RACIAL HARMONY FOR LASTING PEACE, DEVELOPMENT, SAYS DR M

PUTRAJAYA, Aug 29 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today reminded the people to maintain racial harmony as it would guarantee lasting peace and continued development for the country.

He also asked multi-racial Malaysians to show their loyalty to the country through inter-racial cooperation to propel the nation to greater heights.

"Everybody must maintain cordial inter-racial relations. We can reap bountiful benefits from racial harmony in the country," he said when addressing some 2,000 representatives of Chinese guilds and associations nationwide.

Dr Mahathir said the racial harmony that prevailed in the country all this while had enabled Malaysia to develop rapidly since attaining independence 44 years ago.

The Prime Minister also called on the people to value the contributions of the country's founding fathers from the three races -- Malay, Chinese and Indian -- who reached an understanding to live together in this country.

"Malaysia is very fortunate, when we achieved independence 44 years ago, our leaders from the three races -- Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra, Tun Tan Cheng Lock, Tun Tan Siew Sin and Tun V.T. Sambanthan -- made an agreement among themselves that all races must be prepared to live together and make sacrifices for the country's peace and prosperity," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysians are very much indebted to them.

"This is our country. Although we are of diverse race, this is our country, we'll shed our blood and end our life here," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the people should avoid racial riots as such a situation would be a loss to all races because the country would be destroyed.

He said many countries with a multi-racial population cannot be developed owing to racial riots that occurred.

"In Malaysia, the racial riot that happened once in 1969 has given a lesson to everyone in this country," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the community leaders who negotiated managed to solve the problem in a short period and devised a formula to share the country's wealth among the various races.

"Since then, the country has seen rapid development and Malaysia has become the most developed developing country in the world," he said.

Dr Mahathir said foreigners are impressed with the friendly ties among the people in the country.

Dr Mahathir said during the British colonialists' administration, the various races in the country were segregated and did not know each other but now the situation had changed.

"Now, we mix around, we work together, play together and live together. That's Malaysia," he said.

Dr Mahathir is confident that Malaysia would emerge as a developed country by 2020 from the people's hard work to develop the country collectively.

-- BERNAMA

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