

13 MAY 2001

Mahathir-Race

RESOLVE DIFFERENCES WITHOUT ACTING TOUGH -- DR MAHATHIR

PETALING JAYA, May 13 (Bernama) -- The Prime Minister today advised the various races in this country to resolve their differences and misunderstandings amicably and not take a tough line.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said if they were unable to do so, they should remain calm nevertheless and refer the matter to the government for a solution.

This would prevent enmity and a tense situation, he said at the Wesak Day open house organised by eight Buddhist associations here.

"This will be a better option than resorting to violence. If there is enmity, others should try to resolve it peacefully and not add to the problems through their own actions," he said.

The Prime Minister's wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali was also present.

Dr Mahathir said religion while promoting loyalty among its followers also taught tolerance towards people of other faiths.

The Prime Minister said in the absence of tolerance, tension would prevail and there would be misunderstandings among the races, which would be difficult to stop.

Dr Mahathir said, for instance, tension and religious differences continued to prevail in Northern Ireland and in West Asia between Jews and Muslims.

"Malaysia takes pride that there is no tension among the followers of different religions. Temples and other houses of worship can be seen in this country," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the practice of calling on each other by followers of various religions during their respective celebrations had clearly created harmony among the people and with it continued peace and stability.

Dr Siti Hasmah handed over donations from the organiser of the open house, to various charities including Tasputra Perkim, Yayasan Kiwanis and the KL Association for the Deaf.

-- BERNAMA

ZAI MAM AAM