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Setapak centre to promote unity

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - Residents of Taman Sri Rampai, Setapak, can be proud of one of their local institutions for being a catalyst in promoting racial harmony.

The unity centre there, the first in the country, has played a meaningful role in promoting national unity. It is an umbrella body for the Rukun Tetangga (RT) there and 62 others in Sentul.

Although based in a predominantly Chinese area, the unity centre organises activities for all residents.

The secretary of the RT, Alias Ismail, said some members had taken the initiative to obtain land to build the premises.

The idea of having a centre where the various communities could come and celebrate cultural and religious festivals was mooted in 1991. He got the idea from a national unity advisory panel meeting, officiated by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Alias said the meeting gave him the inspiration to establish such a centre. Four years later, he managed to obtain the land to build it.

He said the centre has one distinct advantage - it can organise programmes in a systematic manner. "It is much easier to co-ordinate programmes for all the centres and this is something which other RTs nationwide should emulate".

The centre's community hall is also used for weddings and other cultural functions like open house during festivals.

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