

LET'S UNITE

STAR 30 AUG 2002

Dr M: Put aside differences and focus on building a truly Malaysian race

By SA'ODAH ELIAS

PUTRAJAYA: As the nation makes the final preparations to celebrate its 45th National Day, Malaysians from all walks of life have been urged to put aside their differences and focus on building a truly Malaysian race.

In making the call, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said this was the best time for Malaysians to reaffirm their co-operation and friendship among one other.

"At the time when we celebrate the anniversary of our independence, let's forget that we are made up of different races and religions.

"Let us focus on our patriotic spirit, our commitment and our responsibility towards building a truly Malaysian race," he said at a pre-Merdeka gathering at Dataran Perdana yesterday.

The event was attended by about 2,000 people who represented organisations, including student groups, Malaysians of Siamese descent and various ethnic groups from Sabah and Sarawak as well as the disabled.

Also present was Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali.

Dr Mahathir, who later received National Day greeting cards from each of the organisations, said that as long as Malaysians continued to prize freedom and independence, the future of the country would be assured.

"If all Malaysians truly understand and appreciate

PM: Let's project our Malaysian-ness

STAR 30 AUG 2002

● FROM PAGE ONE

ate the meaning of independence, Malaysia will always be peaceful and progressive," he said. Stressing that unity was essential for the country's peace and well-being, the Prime Minister said:

"We should forget our differences and instead project our Malaysian-ness."

Dr Mahathir said that even though the people were different in terms of their descent, language, culture and religion, they were united in being Malaysians when they cele-

brated National Day.

He also said that there was no better occasion for the people to project unity than when they celebrated the nation's independence.

"On its anniversary, we can truly feel that we are Malaysians," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who said that he was always touched by the spirit of Malaysians in celebrating National Day, expressed confidence that the people would continue to live in peace and prosperity for as long as they appreciated the country's independence.

● TURN TO PAGE THREE