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Dr M: We aim to achieve a Malaysian culture

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the Government strives to achieve a Malaysian culture based on the various cultures practised by the people.

He said the Government would not suppress any culture in its pursuit to reflect the unity in diversity of the multi-racial and multi-cultural Malaysian society.

"We want to do this (formulate a Malaysian culture) without suppressing anybody's culture, but by adding on the various cultures that we have and appreciate here," he said.

Dr Mahathir was speaking at a Chinese New Year gala dinner organised by the Federation of Hokkien Association of Malaysia, Federation of Kwang Tung Association of Malaysia, Federated Teochew Association of Malaysia, Federation of Hainan Association of Malaysia, Federation of Hakka Association of Malaysia, Malaysia Kwangsi Association and the Malaysian Federated San Kiang Association, at a hotel tonight.

Urging the various communities to maintain peace and harmony by improving the current inter-racial understanding, he said that only unity and a deep sense of understanding would be able to maintain the country's prosperity.

"If we fail to maintain peace, then no one community can live happily.

"We cannot take everything for ourselves, we must share. It's better to have 10 per cent of something than 100 per cent of nothing."

He told the 1,000-odd association members that as long as the three major communities in Malaysia worked together, development could continue unhindered.

"We will eventually become a developed country by the year 2020 if this spirit prevails."

In his brief but meaningful speech, Dr Mahathir also thanked the Chinese community for its contribution to the national economy.

Describing Malaysian Chinese businessmen and entrepreneurs as an enterprising lot, he said they had actively participated in the Government's industrialisation initiatives.

Dinner organising committee chairman Datuk Tong Yoke Kim said the gathering provided a good opportunity for the association members to show their appreciation to the Government and Dr Mahathir.

Expressing hope that the Prime Minister would continue to lead the country to greater heights, Tong said the associations wished to play a more active role in enhancing relations and communications between the Government and the various Chinese clans they represent.

"Together we can help maintain the good relations which we have nurtured all these years," he added.

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