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Don't tolerate extremists, says Dr M

PUTRAJAYA, Mon. - Extremists or so-called cultural or language purists should not be tolerated, former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"It is dismal to note that there are groups of Malaysian Chinese whose aim is to convert the country into another China. The Malays, on the other hand, expect everyone else to subscribe to no other language but Malay," he said.

"This kind of chauvinism should not be accepted. Not if they are residing in Malaysia.

"We do not see extremist Indians only because their number is small," he said, adding that a strong majority voice could easily break any attempt by extremists to exert control.

This trend was a good thing, he said, as no race would want its culture to diminish or be assimilated with another.

"It is clear the Chinese and the Indians do not want to assimilate with the Malays, so we must allow these cultural differences to be retained and at the same time harmonise and tolerate ethnic, religious and cultural differences."

Speaking at the Perdana Discourse Series at the Perdana Leadership Foundation here, he said Malays had made adjustments in ensuring the nation enjoyed continued harmony and stability, including acknowledging Malaysia as a multiracial country.

This, he said, put the race above some other "landowners" who refused to accept immigrants into their homeland.

"The philosophy of sharing the cake has helped strengthen the nation," he said.

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