

RACIAL HARMONY

BE WISE AND STAY UNITED, PEOPLE URGED

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Unity can make Malaysia more successful, says PM

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PRIME Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday warned that disengagement between races would not be healthy for Malaysia.

"Malaysians are keeping their respective languages and culture, but still can live together.

"Granted, there is no racial riot, except that one time in 1969, which has not benefited anyone.

"What is important is for us to work together and not create animosity.

"True, there is no (racial) riot (nowadays), but there is still disengagement (between different races) which will not be good or safe for us.

"We must come together (including) with the other races in Sabah and Sarawak.

"If we can do this, I believe Malaysia can be more success-

ful," said Dr Mahathir at the first monthly gathering of the Prime Minister's Department this year.

Malaysia, the prime minister said, had been lucky compared with other countries because past leaders had seen the importance of unity and even granted citizenship to other races.

"Since independence, political efforts were also made to include other races (in the development of Malaysia). Past leaders have agreed not to create animosity and instead come together, which is a wise move.

"We have inherited a multi-cultural country, but at this moment in time, we are still not united to a level that it should be as many still want to maintain their link to their country of origin. Thus, Malaysia cannot be perceived as one race," he added.

Dr Mahathir stressed the importance of history which provided many lessons, warning that those who forgot the lessons of history would be condemned to repeat their mistakes.

"I believe we don't want to repeat past mistakes. We must know our history because it puts us where we are now."

Dr Mahathir also emphasised the importance of history for all



Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad addressing civil servants at the monthly gathering of the Prime Minister's Department in Putrajaya yesterday. With him is Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail. PIC BY MOHD FADLI

government servants and politicians.

"So long as we remember our history, our nation will continue to be peaceful and we can enjoy progress as well as success that can be shared with all races equally," said Dr Mahathir, adding that being ignorant of history would prevent a person from acting wisely.

He also said Malaysia was lucky to have achieved independence without spilling blood or through chaos.

"And, Malaysia is progressing fast because it is run by those who have administrative experience.

"Countries that are run by the inexperienced, such nations are not governed well and are ruled with an iron fist."

Dr Mahathir also said the people must constantly remind themselves that Malaysia was a multiracial nation.

"As any multiracial nation, there is always the possibility of

racial unrest. The locals are uneasy with the presence of outsiders known as migrants.

"Many nations, including African nations and Myanmar, have chased away outsiders.

"(For instance), when Myanmar attained its Independence, the locals chased away the Indians whom they viewed as a threat.

"The Indians' strong presence economically was seen as having prevented the locals from getting a place in their own economy."

Dr Mahathir also highlighted the importance of distributing the country's wealth equally among all races, saying a wide gap between the poor and the rich could lead to riots as what had happened in other countries.

"We must remember that it is our job to ensure the country's wealth is distributed fairly or to a level that can be accepted by all.

"We do not want to be seen as a rich nation that does not distribute its wealth equitably."