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KUALA LUMPUR, FEB 17 (BERNAMA) -- (DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD STRESSED TODAY THAT RACIAL UNITY IS VITAL TO ENSURE CONTINUED STABILITY IN THE COUNTRY.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID HE HOPED THAT THE EXISTING GOODWILL AMONG THE VARIOUS RACES WOULD BE MAINTAINED.

SPEAKING AT THE CHINESE NEW YEAR +OPEN HOUSE+ HOSTED BY THE MCA AT THE PARTY'S HEADQUARTERS HERE, HE SAID HE WISHED THAT THE YEAR OF THE DRAGON WOULD BRING GREATER PROSPERITY TO MALAYSIANS.

HE SAID HE WAS PLEASED TO NOTE THE MULTI-RACIAL ATTENDANCE AT THE FUNCTION AND SAID: +THIS IS A GOOD SIGN FOR THE COUNTRY AS THE PEOPLE TRY TO ENHANCE HARMONY.+

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR THANKED THE PEOPLE OF ALL RACES FOR BEING UNITED IN WANTING TO SEE A PEACEFUL AND PROGRESSIVE COUNTRY AND A STABLE GOVERNMENT WHEN SEVERAL PROBLEMS CROPPED UP RECENTLY. -- MORE  
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MCA PRESIDENT DATUK DR LING LIONG SIK, IN HIS SPEECH, SAID HE WAS CONFIDENT THE YEAR OF THE DRAGON WOULD BRING ABOUT GREATER PROSPERITY, PEACE AND STABILITY TO THE NATION.

DATUK DR LING, WHO IS TRANSPORT MINISTER, EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE YEAR WOULD ALSO HELP ENHANCE RACIAL UNITY AND FURTHER IMPROVE THE BARISAN NASIONAL (BN) SYSTEM.

+THE YEAR OF THE DRAGON IS A YEAR FILLED WITH HOPES AND LET US WELCOME IT BY RENEWING OUR CONFIDENCE IN THE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION SYSTEM...+ HE SAID.

HE DESCRIBED THE LAST YEAR AS ONE FILLED WITH CHALLENGES.

DATUK DR LING ALSO HOPED MALAYSIANS WOULD ENHANCE UNITY AND COOPERATION AS THEY SURMOUNT FUTURE CHALLENGES. -- MORE  
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HE ALSO SAID THAT EFFORTS SHOULD BE MADE TO ENHANCE THE DISCIPLINE OF THE PEOPLE TO IMPROVE NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR AND DATUK SERI DATIN PADUKA DR SITI HASMAH LATER ATTENDED THE GERAKAN CHINESE NEW YEAR +OPEN HOUSE+ AT FEDERAL HOTEL.

THE PRIME MINISTER WAS GREETED ON ARRIVAL BY GERAKAN PRESIDENT DATUK DR LIM KHENG YAIK AND HIS DEPUTY, DATUK PAUL LEONG.

AMONG THOSE WHO ATTENDED THE FUNCTIONS WERE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER ENCIK GHAFAR BABA, FINANCE MINISTER DATUK PADUKA DAIM ZAINUDDIN, EDUCATION MINISTER ENCIK ANWAR IBRAHIM AND WORKS MINISTER DATUK S. SAMY VELLU. -- BERNAMA  
1357MST 17 02 88