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· Mahathir-message

TASK OF. ALL TO" ENSURE ECONOMY REGISTERS DESIRED GROWTH

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KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 31 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has called for cooperation of all Malaysians to ensure that the country's economy would continue to register the required growth rate.

He said this was important as the country's development, and progress were dependent on a healthy and continuous economic expansion.

+The responsibility of ensuring that the country's economy continues to expand is not the responsibility of the government, alone. It's the task and responsibility of all Malaysians, he said in his New Year message over Radio and Televisyen Malaysia (RTM) tonight.

He said Malaysians could play their role by being thrifty and not be lavish in their spending in efforts to curb inflation.

· They should also increase their savings so that it could be used for productive investment, he said. --more

▼31/12/18-27MST

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Mahathir-message 2 Kuala Lumpur

He said a strong domestic savings was a basis needed to ensure that investments in the country were increased.

· Likewise, he said, the workers could contribute by increasing their productivity and efficiency while not making unreasonable demands for pay increases.

+Any wage increase must be commensurate with an increase in productivity, he said, adding that increase not accompanied by higher productivity would only result in Malaysian products becoming uncompetitive.

Dr Mahathir said that, when this happened, the losers, apart from other employers and the country, would be the workers themselves.

The exporters on their part should be more aggressive in making the necessary adjustments to seize whatever opportunities which were made available by the changes in the international economic and political scenario, he said. --more

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He said they should 'also be bold enough to penetrate new markets and not to limit only to the traditional ones in the effort to widen the markets for Malaysian goods.

'In this context-, the government has initiated moves to improve relations with countries of the South. It's now up to Malaysian companies to seize these opportunities,+ he 'said.

Dr Mahathir said that while Malaysia had vast natural resources and capable human resources to become a developed country, these resources alone were not sufficient without a change in attitudes and good discipline among Malaysians.

Negative attitudes, which could impede even greater excellence in performance, must, be discarded and replaced with 'good values such as hardwork, integrity and strong adherence to discipline, he said.

Dr Mahathir said that although the country's economic achievements was something to be proud of, there was a need for caution as the high economic growth might not be sustained'. --more

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After five consecutive years of rapid growth, the country's economy was expected to undergo a process of consolidation, he said.

+Although there are early signs indicating that a recovery is in the making, especially in Japan and the United States, most economies of the industrialised countries are still ailing,+ he said.

He said the latest developments in the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT) negotiations, the European Community (EC), and North America Free Trade Area (NAFTA), while presenting new opportunities, were expected to pose even greater challenges to 'Malaysia's economy.

Hence, he added, Malaysia's economy was anticipated to grow about 8 per cent next year compared with 8.5 per cent this year.

+Although this is still an encouraging rate, we can no longer take for granted that the economic growth will always be high,+ he said. -- more

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On the political front, Dr Mahathir hoped that the people would maintain existing harmony and unity so that the country would continue to progress and prosper.

+Without political stability,- we 'will not be able to achieve the developed nation status which we envisioned,+ he said while inviting Malaysians to be wise of racial conflicts which had made life more difficult and, once occurred, would be impossible to contain as proven in several countries.

Dr Mahathir, who started his message by inviting the people to be grateful for being able to celebrate the New Year in peace and harmony, **said** the peace and stability enjoyed were blessings indeed, considering different parts of the world were plagued with war, conflicts and famine.

Hence, he said the people ought to be even more grateful for the achievement and the situation experienced in the whole of 1992 which, by God's will, were the results of their moderation and relentless effort.

+I'm confident that if all parties play their roles, carry out their responsibilities effectively and strive hard, our country will be able to face the challenges in 1993 and the years beyond,+ he said.

He 'also -wished all' Malaysians a Happy New Year and hoped 1993 would bring greater success and prosperity to all. --Bernama

▼31/12/19-41MST