

R GE 30-08 00195 EGO41

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Mahathir-message

(EMBARGO: For release after 9pm today)

PEOPLE CAN AVERT CALAMITIES, SAYS DR M

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KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 30 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Malaysia is among countries that is safest in terms of tragedies and murders but untoward incidents still occur mainly because of the people's own doing.

The Prime Minister said as all bad things that befell the country were the result of people's actions, it was also within them to take preventive and rehabilitative efforts.

"If road accidents happen, buildings collapse, river water becomes murky, beautiful hills and mountains are scarred, drugs are abused and AIDS spreads -- they are all due to our own actions," he said in his 37th National Day message carried live by RTM tonight.

"All these are man-made tragedies and we are the ones who can prevent them. All that is needed is better self-control and a more responsible attitude," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was fortunate in that it was free from catastrophes like earthquakes, typhoons, big floods and mass killings that ravaged other countries. -- more

▼30/08/18-53MST

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Mahathir-message 2 Kuala Lumpur (EMBARGO)

He cited as examples the conflicts in countries like Somalia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Rwanda where millions had perished.

In fact, in Rwanda more than two million people had to flee to other countries and thousands of the refugees had succumbed to diseases while the rest were facing famine, he said.

Dr Mahathir said although the government had formulated laws and put in place machinery to enforce them, untoward incidents still occurred and in fact were increasing.

(Among the recent tragedies were the Highland Towers collapse in December last year which claimed 48 lives and three major fires which affected the Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Subang the past two years.)

Dr Mahathir said: "It is clear that the government and laws by themselves cannot stamp out untoward incidents."

He said most road accidents, building collapse cases, fires, drug abuses which led to AIDS and environmental pollution were caused by non-criminals.

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▼30/08/18-58MST

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Mahathir-message 3 Kuala Lumpur (EMBARGO)

"Whether their intentions are bad or otherwise, the consequences are just as bad," he said, adding that imposing punishment after an "accident" would not restore anything.

Prevention was needed and the most effective preventive efforts were those initiated by the people themselves, he said.

"Having many police personnel to deter people from speeding or overtaking dangerously may be able to reduce road accidents but the cost of deploying them will be very high and this will ultimately have to be borne by the people," he said.

Dr Mahathir urged the people to heed the government's calls and efforts to check the dadah menace, road accidents, the frequent fires, loafing, incidence of building collapse, environmental pollution and the like.

"If we are aware of and be thankful for our good fortunes and blessings from God, it is not asking too much for us to be law-abiding people and discard any irresponsible attitude," he said.

He urged Malaysians to make the country's 38th year of independence as "the year we change our attitude towards ourselves." -- more

▼30/08/19-22MST

CNS9377

R GE 30-08 00176 EG044

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Mahathir-message 4 Kuala Lumpur (EMBARGO)

He said the government would fulfil its responsibilities but the people should build a culture of giving priority to their responsibility toward themselves and society.

"God willing, if we discard habits that are detrimental to us, the country will not only be more progressive but its development will not be tarnished by (negative) trends we see are afflicting the developed countries of the West," he said.

He said the type of developed country Malaysia aspired to be under Vision 2020 was not the western model that was littered with dadah, AIDS, moral decadence, laziness, and other negative things but one that was more prosperous and whose civilisation was shielded from collapse.

"For this, we have to mould a suitable culture from now," he said.

He said independence day was an appropriate occasion to make a resolution that "not only should we grab opportunities to boost our progress and prosperity but we should also eradicate non-beneficial practices." -- more

▼30/08/19-50MST

CNS9384

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Mahathir-message 5 Kuala Lumpur (EMBARGO)

He said that with the people's cooperation, the government had developed Malaysia into one of the most progressive developing nations. The people's standard of living had improved and so had their average incomes, he said.

Dr Mahathir said the people should not forget the services of the country's warriors who died in defence of their security and integrity.

"Just as they were willing to pawn their lives for us, we should prove that we deserve to be defended by them," he added.

In his message, Energy, Telecommunications and Post Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said the BN government's dynamic policies and efficient management were pivotal to the country's phenomenal development.

The country's success was made possible by the prevailing stability and cooperation and compromise among the various races, said Samy Vellu, who is MIC President. -- more

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▼30/08/20-02MST

CNS9405

R GE 30-08 00135 EG047

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Mahathir-message 6 (last) Kuala Lumpur (EMBARGO)

Malayan Technical Services Union (MTSU) president Mohd Yusop Harmain Shah attributed the country's progress to the able leadership of Dr Mahathir.

A member of the National Unity Advisory Panel, Encik Lee Lam Thye, said Malaysians must reflect on their achievements and weaknesses to prepare for the future.

The nation's multi-racial and multi-religious people must work together to achieve national development, he said in a statement.

The DAP made use of the occasion to urge the government to lift the ban on public rallies.

In a statement, DAP Secretary-General Lim Kit Siang said the government should also restore local council elections, abolish the Internal Security Act (ISA) and impose stricter anti-corruption laws. -- Bernama

NR YBY

▼30/08/20-23MST