

31 AUG 1996

Mahathir-National Day

NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATIONS FOR ALL, SAYS MAHATHIR

KOTA KINABALU, Aug 31 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamed said today the National Day celebration held in Sabah this year, though in a way related to the Barisan Nasional, is truly meant for all Malaysians.

"It has some relations with the BN success in Sabah because we have the cooperation from the BN state government, in its preparation, and their participation and contributions, " he told a press conference at the old airport here before flying to Tawau on the east coast of the state.

"I hope the response to the National Day will not be viewed from the political aspect, rather it must be regarded as a celebration for all the people," he added.

He was also confident that Sabah would progress on the same pace as any other states if its political stability was safeguarded.

Citing the vital multi-racial cooperation as a pre-condition for political stability, he said: "If there is a certain group exploiting the racial feelings, and giving priority only to one group, political stability will be affected."

Dr Mahathir added that economic progress would also contribute towards enhancing the people's unity and the feeling of nationalism, apart from other factors.

Meanwhile, the National Day Organising Committee Chairman Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik said he was satisfied with the overall presentation being held in Sabah, for the first time.

"I am satisfied with the event today, and the fine weather compared with all the previous three rehearsals held earlier in hot weather," he told reporters at the Kota Kinabalu International Airport here.

He said all the events in today's two and a half-hour programme, beginning at 7 a.m., had gone on smoothly.

More than 12,000 people took part in the various events of the celebration, like the gymnastic display at the padang, witnessed by 25,000 spectators from all over the country.

Sabbaruddin who is also the Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister, said future National Day celebrations would be held outside Kuala Lumpur once in three years, and the next venue outside Kuala Lumpur would be in Pulau Pinang in 1999.

-- BERNAMA

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