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Genting-birthday

GENTING BOSS CELEBRATES AUSPICIOUS 80TH BIRTHDAY

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 22 (Bernama) -- Tan Sri Lim Goh Tong is not only one of Asia's richest men but blessed with a long life as well.

Well-known for his frugal lifestyle despite a reputed personal fortune of almost RM9 billion, the Genting boss turned 80 today and celebrated the auspicious milestone with a dinner at the Istana Hotel.

Unlike most birthdays, the guests were asked not bring any gifts or to insert congratulatory messages in the newspapers.

Among the guests were Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, and the who's who in the Malaysian corporate world.

Looking hale and hearty and much younger than his years, Lim paid tribute to his family and to all the guests, thanking them for supporting his business ventures that "allowed me to turn my dreams and visions into reality."

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In his speech read out by his second son, Datuk Lim Kok Thay, he said: "Above all, I am grateful to the Almighty for having blessed me with good health so that I am able to celebrate my 80th birthday with you all."

The entrepreneur and philanthropist marked the occasion by making a donation of RM3.8 million to several charities and invited Dr Mahathir to present the cheques.

The amount was from RM8 million raised by his family members, friends and the Resorts World Group for Yayasan Lim which he had started in 1978, in conjunction with his birthday.

"I've been very fortunate over the years, and am well aware of my good fortune and many blessings," said Lim who started off as a carpenter earning about 80 sen a day and was later a Class A contractor with the Public Works Department after he migrated here from China when he was 20.

Lim attributed his success to his family and believed that traditional values such as hard work, integrity, dedication and loyalty were the key to a strong family and nation.

"In Chinese, the word for country is made up of two characters. The first character stand for nation and the second character for family. What this means is that to have strong family units is to have a strong country.

"Our country is blessed with good leadership and if its people unite and work as one big family, then the future will continue to be very bright for all our children and for Malaysia," he said.

Lim said he was lucky to have the opportunity in the early 1960s to develop Genting Highlands as a tourist resort. He was presented a special award by the Culture, Arts and Tourism Ministry in June this year in recognition of his contribution to the national tourism industry.

He is also the brain-child behind Star Cruise Sdn Bhd, one of the most successful holiday cruise companies.

Now presiding over his billion ringgit empire that spans the world notably the Genting Group that alone is worth RM18.4 billion, Lim has proved that language, or the lack of it in his case, is not an obstacle to success.

Lim speaks almost no English and a smattering of "pasar Malay". He converses in Hokkien with a heavy Anxi accent harking back to his roots in Anxi district in Fujian province.

He is still chairman and joint managing director of Genting Berhad with

Kok Thay. He is also Resorts World Bhd chairman and joint chief executive of Asiatic Development Berhad and The Commercial Bank of Hong Kong Limited apart from heading his family concern, Kien Huat Realty and Kien Huat Berhad. -- BERNAMA

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