

07/02/1997

Gong Xi Raya unique to the nation, says PM

Zulkifli Othman

THE double celebration, which has been called "Gong Xi Raya" or "Kongsi Raya", manifests the unique relationship among Malaysians of different races and religions, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad says.

Wishing the Chinese community a Happy New Year, the Prime Minister, together with wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah, said this year's Chinese New Year celebration is special because it nearly coincides with the Muslim celebration of Hari Raya Aidilfitri.

Dr Mahathir said it is clear that differences in race and religion are no barrier for Malaysians to celebrate their festivals together.

"This high tolerance among our people is the key that has enabled us to live in unity, cooperation and in peace and prosperity.

"These are the factors that will be good for the development of the economy and people of all races," he said in his greetings.

Dr Mahathir said the Government is constantly trying to nurture this spirit of tolerance to guarantee that the perpetuation of harmonious race relations in Malaysia.

"This will be important to ensure that our country continues to be strong and stable, not only in race relations but also in the development and growth of the country," he said.

Dr Mahathir encouraged all Malaysians regardless of race to celebrate the Chinese New Year in the traditional way of visiting friends and open houses.

"In conjunction with this Chinese New Year, my wife and I are pleased to wish Malaysians a Happy New Year and Gong Xi Fa Cai," he said in a statement.

Bernama reports: Malaysians should resolve to strengthen further the goodwill, harmony and understanding among the various races, Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said in a message released yesterday.

He said the Chinese New Year and the Hari Raya Aidilfitri double celebration would give Malaysia the opportunity to show the world that racial and religious differences do not deter Malaysians from celebrating their respective festivals together in goodwill and harmony.

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