

01/01/1997

King and PM extend New Year greetings

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - The Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Ja'afar and Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Najihah and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today extended New Year greetings to all Malaysians.

Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Ja'afar and Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Najihah advised the people to be thrifty and save up for the future.

They also reminded the people of the dangers of inflation which frequently beset developed countries and eroded the value of the people's high incomes.

"This is because high income in the midst of rising inflation will cause the increased income to be unable to buy more goods or services," they said in their 1997 New Year message.

In extending New Year greetings to Malaysians, their Majesties said they were thankful to Allah that the people could usher in yet another year of peace and stability.

In 1996, the country was hit by disasters like the mudslide in Pos Dipang, Tapah; the Greg tropical storm in the west coast of Sabah and several road accidents which had claimed many lives, they said.

"These disasters and road crashes should be a lesson to all. The bitter experience should help us to face the future better in the hope that 1997 will be a more comfortable year," they said.

They believed that the Government could maintain the country's economic growth at an encouraging level.

They expressed the hope that the problem of illegal immigrants could be resolved because foreign labour was badly needed in the construction, estate and industrial sectors.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tonight urged each and every Malaysian to work with renewed vigour and vitality for the greater success of the nation.

"Consistent with the New Year spirit, let us all strengthen our spirit and resolve to work harder so as to bring our nation to greater heights.

"God willing, with a more determined effort and with the co-operation of all levels of the society, Malaysia will be more successful next year, and the years after," he said in his New Year message over Radio and Television Malaysia.

Wishing all Malaysians a Happy New Year, Dr Mahathir also reminded the people that the nation's success and achievements should not result in complacency and arrogance.

"In fact, our success should strengthen our commitment and resolve to work even harder for it is only with hard work that we can ensure the country's continued success.

"Such success is crucial because we plan to be a developed nation by the year 2020 and the year 2020 is only 24 years away," he said.

He said the Government's commitment towards bringing progress and greater prosperity to the nation could be seen from the various projects and plans formulated and implemented. These included the Seventh Malaysia Plan, the Second Industrial Master Plan and the Multimedia Super Corridor.

If these plans were successful, then the nation would not only be more developed, but all Malaysians would be able to enjoy a more comfortable and better quality of life, he said.

However, he said, in a democratic nation practising open or market economy, the Government alone would not be able to implement policies or

plans without the participation and efforts of the people.

"Whether the nation is stable or otherwise will depend on the people. It would appear that now there are individuals who are unhappy with the stability prevailing in our country. They deliberately try to create situations which invite police action against them.

"When the Government is forced to take action according to the law, these people would be able to criticise this country as being supposedly undemocratic. And their friends from abroad will be pleased, for they are always looking for reasons to smear our country."

Dr Mahathir said those who deliberately conspired with foreigners to threaten the country's political stability and peace appeared to be ungrateful for the benefits they had received.

"This is obvious for we cannot see any positive results from the actions. Could their objective of supposedly fighting for human rights in foreign countries be achieved?

"What is clear is that they will cause a strain in our relations with our friendly neighbours," he said.

"Is our nation not concerned with human rights? Did we not send our security forces to numerous countries, including Somalia and Bosnia? Where were these champions, defendants of the plight of foreigners, when Malaysia was protecting the rights of the people all over the world?" he said.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysians should concentrate on the acquisition of sophisticated knowledge and technology to take the country into the Information Technology age.

He said with the introduction of various technologies in the Information Age, the people's way of life would change and whether they could adapt to these changes to their benefit would depend on them.

"For so long as we adhere to the old technology, we will be left behind, the way we would have been if we had continued with padi planting and rubber tapping," he said.

(END)