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KING CONGRATULATES JAPANESE EMPEROR

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 22 (Bernama) -- Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Ja'afar has sent a congratulatory message to Emperor Akihito of Japan on the occasion of his 64th birthday.

In his message, Tuanku Ja'afar wished the government and people of Japan everlasting peace, stability and prosperity, according to a Foreign Ministry statement issued here today.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in his message to his counterpart Ryutaro Hashimoto, said he looked forward to developing and expanding closer trade and economic relations.

"I am confident that under His Majesty's peaceful reign, Japan will continue to maintain its rapid growth and progress," he said.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, in a message to his counterpart Keizo Obuchi, said he was confident that the two countries would move together in the new millennium and work closely towards promoting global as well as regional peace, understanding and development.

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