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Mahathir-Peace

PEACE HELPS COUNTRY TO DEVELOP ITS ECONOMY, SAYS MAHATHIR

KOTA KINABALU, Feb 17 (Bernama) -- Malaysia enjoys favourable economic growth because there is peace in the country, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight.

He said it had facilitated government's efforts to bring development to the people.

He said the government's policy of fair distribution of the nation's wealth to the people irrespective of their races and religions had contributed to peace in the country.

"The development concept practised by Malaysia is that based on fair distribution, not that of giving everything to one community thereby causing envy in others," he said, addressing some 7,000 people at the Chinese New Year and Hari Raya Puasa gathering at the Sabah Trade Centre, here.

But, Dr Mahathir said the large portion given to the economically less capable was merely to ensure a balance among the communities.

"This philosophy of development brings good and this is proven by our presence here tonight in an atmosphere of peace and friendly without feeling suspicious of one another," he said.

In this respect, the Prime Minister said the tradition of holding open house by the leaders during festivities should be continued to give the various communities the opportunity of joining in the celebration.

"Have the open house as frequent as possible and invite all communities to join in the celebration. The important thing is our intention to entertain them as best as we could," he said.

According to him, the "Kongsi Raya" concept should not be seen as against one's religious belief because it was merely one way of showing happiness at being able to celebrate together an important occasion.

Dr Mahathir later officially opened the Sabah Trade Centre which is situated in Jalan Istiadat in Likas Bay here. It serves as the one-stop information centre for investment and trade in the state.

The centre, which will also help to enhance Sabah's role within the context of East Asean Growth Area (EAGA), has vast exhibition space which has been fully booked for 13 exhibitions scheduled this year.

Present at the function were Chief Minister Datuk Yong Teck Lee and state cabinet ministers as well as Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Chong Kah Kiat, Sabah Umno Liaison Chief Datuk Osu Sukam, former Chief Minister Datuk Salleh Said Keruak and leaders of Sabah Barisan Nasional (BN) component parties. -- BERNAMA

JS ABG