

22 DEC 1998

Agong-Message

AGONG SENDS BIRTHDAY GREETINGS TO EMPEROR AKIHITO

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 22 (Bernama) -- The Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Ja'afar has sent a congratulatory message to Emperor Akihito of Japan for his 65th birthday tomorrow.

He also conveyed Malaysia's best wishes for the emperor's good health.

In a statement released through Wisma Putra here today, Tuanku Ja'afar said Malaysia was confident that Japan will continue to enjoy enduring peace, stability and prosperity, and that relations between both countries will continue to be strengthened.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, in a similar message to his counterpart Keizo Obuchi, said he was confident Japan will surmount all economic difficulties and continue its path of prosperity and progress under the benevolent reign of his majesty.

"I am pleased that under the reign of Emperor Akihito, there has been significant increase in the exchange of visits between the leaders and peoples of both countries.

"These have strengthened our friendship and cooperation which augurs well for the future relationship of our two countries," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia valued its friendship with Japan and hoped that both governments will continue to work closely together to strengthen the existing close ties.

He said it was a pleasure to meet Obuchi at the recent Asean summit in Hanoi and looked forward to a fruitful working relationship with the Japanese premier in the coming years.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi also sent a similar message to his counterpart Masahiko Koumura.

-- BERNAMA

AKT YBY