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Be thankful for tolerance and unity, says Dr Mahathir

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Malaysians were fortunate and should be thankful that tolerance among them had strengthened and united the people.

In his Christmas Day message, the Prime Minister said it was because of this that the economic problems and attempts to cause racial unrest had failed to divide the people.

"Events in other countries where the economic crisis has led to clashes between the followers of various religions should be viewed as a lesson.

"It is clear that the move to reduce the disparity in the level of development among races has significantly lowered the chances of racial tension occurring when the country is hit by a crisis."

Dr Mahathir, who together with his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali wished all Malaysian Christians a merry Christmas, said measures taken by the Government to address the economic problems and which had received full support from the people, had started to yield results. "The situation is generally much more better than before."

Noting that Christmas could still be joyously celebrated, he said Malaysians of all races, religions and cultural backgrounds had the opportunity to visit their Christian friends like in previous years.

"Even for Muslims who cannot have any of the food because of the fasting month, they can still call on their friends to wish them merry Christmas."

He said visiting one another on festive occasions could enhance co-operation among the various races and religions, besides strengthening harmony.

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