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Mahathir-Christmas

ECONOMIC RECOVERY PROMISES JOYOUS CHRISTMAS

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 24 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the country is gradually recovering from the economic problems that hit the nation a year ago and the people can still look forward to celebrating a joyous Christmas tomorrow.

In a message wishing Malaysian Christians a "Merry Christmas", Dr Mahathir said the people's support for government measures to overcome the economic problems was beginning to bear results.

"The situation in our country is generally far better than previously," he said.

The Prime Minister said Malaysians were fortunate and should be thankful that the spirit of tolerance they practised had reinforced unity among them that the economic difficulties and attempts to spark off riots failed to create disharmony among the masses.

"We should learn from events in other countries whose economic problems had led to clashes between followers of the different religions.

"It is obviously clear that efforts to bridge the development gap between races have effectively minimised potential racial tensions when crisis hits a nation."

Dr Mahathir said notwithstanding the economic slowdown brought about by speculative raids on the currency and the stock market, the country's Christian community could still celebrate Christmas joyfully.

Malaysia's multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-cultural citizens were able to visit their Christian friends as during Christmas celebrations of past years, he said.

However, since Muslims are observing their Ramadan fast, they would not be able to eat and drink but they could still visit their Christian friends to extend Christmas greetings.

"Visiting one another during the festive celebrations can forge closer relations between multi-racial and multi-religious Malaysians and helps preserve peace in the country," said Dr Mahathir.

"My wife and I wish all Malaysians of Christian faith a Merry Christmas." -- BERNAMA

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