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Agong-Message

FURTHER ENHANCE UNITY DURING THE CHINESE NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS, SAYS AGONG

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 27 (Bernama) -- The Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Ja'afar and Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Najihah have extended Chinese New Year greetings to the Chinese community in the country.

In his message, Tuanku Ja'afar hoped that the Chinese New Year celebrations, to be followed a few days later by Hari Raya Aidil Fitri, would further enhance goodwill and unity among the various races.

He said that it was vital to further promote unity and solidarity as racial harmony was the nation's strength especially during the current economic crisis.

The double celebrations served as an excellent time for the various races to forge closer ties and cooperation, he said.

Tuanku Ja'afar also called on the people to exercise tolerance and patience during the economic crisis facing the country.

"They should also cooperate and support the government to restore the economic situation," he said.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, also wished the Chinese community Happy Chinese New Year.

Dr Mahathir, in his message, said that the government had initiated measures to revive the nation's economy but it would take some time to materialise and require the cooperation of the people especially the business community.

"If we don't do anything that could cause the country to suffer losses just to reap instant benefits for ourselves, economic recovery will be achieved in a short period of time," he said.

The Prime Minister said that everyone would gain from the economic recovery.

He was confident that with the people's full cooperation and support for the government and their undivided loyalty to the country, the economic crisis could be overcome.

He said that although the country was facing economic problems, he hoped that the Chinese community could still enjoy the Chinese New Year celebrations.

"This year's celebrations may not be as lavish as the previous years but the spirit of the auspicious occasion is still very much alive," he said.

Dr Mahathir was confident that the people had exercised prudent spending so that traders would not face problems due to poor sales while the celebrations need not have to be too low key.

He also said that in conjunction with the Chinese New Year celebrations, Malaysians, known for their high degree of tolerance, should continue with the tradition of receiving and visiting each other's homes.

MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, in his message, reminded the people to buy locally-produced goods, holiday at home, study at institutions of higher learning in the country and save with local banks.

Thrift should be further promoted among the people especially during the festive season so that they could have savings for the future, he said.

Dr Ling said that in view of the new year being the Year of the Tiger, reflecting courage, bravery and dynamism, he hoped that the people would adopt such elements and join forces to ensure economic recovery within a short period.

He said that the nation's strong economic fundamentals had been recognised by the world and with this confidence, the nation could achieve moderate economic growth this year and the level of development could also improve.

"The government has taken stringent measures to revive the nation's economy and we are now seeing the positive effects. But the people should not be complacent and continue to strive for economic recovery," he said.

He hoped that the people would give their strong support to the government to overcome the economic problems and prevent actions that could affect the nation's economy as it would be detrimental to everyone.

MIC president Datuk Seri S.Samy Vellu, in wishing the Muslim and Chinese community Selamat Hari Raya and a Happy New Year, urged Malaysians to work extra hard to preserve unity.

Samy Vellu, who is Works Minister, said they should not be unduly worried over the current economic problems facing the country during the festive season but should instead continue to hold "open house" to strengthen unity.

"Our unity is vital to our country's stability. We must not let outside forces to destroy our unity which we have built. Our unity should remain strong for another 1,000 years to come and more," he said.

He again called on the people to spend wisely and put their money in local financial institutions to help the nation recover from its economic blues.

"We must show our duty, loyalty and commitment and make sacrifices," he said and reiterated the MIC's support for the continued leadership of Dr Mahathir and Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim in tackling the economic problems.

Samy Vellu also called on motorists using the country's highways and roads to be extra careful when returning to their hometowns for the double festival.

"Please take a good rest before you start your long journey and return home safely," he added.

DAP secretary-general Lim Kit Siang, in his Chinese New Year message, called on the people to unite in a bid to save the country's economy and defend its economic freedom.

DAP Youth National chairman Lim Guan Eng said Malaysians should not lose hope in the economic crisis but take steps to ensure that only those who were not responsible for causing and worsening the economy crisis were allowed to revive the country's economy.

Meanwhile, MCA will hold open house at the Wisma MCA in Jalan Ampang between 9am and noon. Parti Gerakan will hold a similar function at the party's headquarters at Menara PGRM, Jalan Pudu Ulu, from 10am to 1pm. --

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