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Mahathir-Hakka

CHINESE COMMUNITY HELPS NATION THWART CURRENCY SPECULATORS

PETALING JAYA, Nov 5 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the basic economic strength of the Chinese community has helped the country face the recent attack by currency speculators.

The Chinese had clearly shown their willingness to share the bounty that Malaysia offered with the Malays and the other races in the overall interest of the nation's stability.

Opening the four-day 15th World Hakka Convention at the Sunway Lagoon Resort Hotel here, Dr Mahathir expressed hope that the close cooperation and mutual understanding among the different races would continue.

"The cooperation between the Malays and Chinese - or to be more exact - the Hakkas, had its beginning one and a half centuries ago," he said addressing more than 1,200 delegates from Hakka Associations around the world.

As the prime minister was delivering his speech, many participants flocked to the front of the dais to take pictures of him.

Dr Mahathir recalled that the cooperation began when Mohamad Tahir, then leader of the Malay community in Kuala Lumpur and two Hakka leaders -- Yap Ah Loy and Yap Ah Shak -- laid the ground work for the development of modern Kuala Lumpur.

The prime minister said the history of Kuala Lumpur would be incomplete if one did not take into consideration the contribution of the Hakka leaders who became "Kapitan China" of Chinese captains of the tin industry.

Dr Mahathir said he was pleased that the World Hakka community chose to have its convention here, reflecting Malaysia's established reputation as an international convention centre attracting leaders from a variety of fields.

Describing the Malaysian Hakka community as the cream, he said it had grown into a cohesive force displaying not only vibrancy and entrepreneurship but also has within its ranks people who have distinguished themselves in the various professions, including politics.

Also present were Federation of Hakka Associations of Malaysia president Tan Sri Jeffrey Cheah, MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik and Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Abu Hassan Omar.

Cheah, on behalf of the federation, presented a cheque for RM100,000 to Dr Mahathir as a donation for Bakti, the charity body of wives of ministers and deputy ministers.

-- BERNAMA

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