

28 MAY 1999

Wesak-Mahathir

FREEDOM OF WORSHIP COMES WITH RESPONSIBILITY- DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, May 28 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight the government is committed to guaranteeing freedom of worship for the people but this right should be accompanied with responsibility.

"To enable everyone among us to enjoy a peaceful life, we should be ready to sacrifice a portion of our rights," he said in his Wesak Day message.

Dr Mahathir said the followers of Buddhism in Malaysia had shown that they could make this sacrifice so that everyone else would be able to enjoy as much freedom as possible in the long run in a multiracial society.

The Prime Minister praised Buddhists for their immense contributions to the development and progress of Malaysia.

Apart from doing social work and running old folks homes, orphanages, medical centres, schools and drug addict rehabilitation centres, they also played a big role in fostering religious and racial harmony among people of different religions and cultures, he said.

Dr Mahathir said as the followers of a religion which chose the middle path, the Buddhist community rejected extremism in any form and from whatever source.

"This principle is among the factors that have made our country peaceful and prosperous."

The Prime Minister hoped that Buddhists would continue with their efforts to create a just society for all Malaysians in the new millennium.

Dr Mahathir and Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali wished all Malaysians of the Buddhist faith "Selamat Menyambut Hari Wesak".

--BERNAMA

ES AAM