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Mahathir-Tolerance

MAJORITY MALAYSIANS ARE TOLERANT, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

PUTRAJAYA, Dec 27 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today majority of Malaysians were tolerant and had good relations with each other.

He said if nobody "disturbed" the people, it would help in the integration of the various races in the country.

"Only in the fringes, there are intolerant people. But, I think in Malaysia. majority of the people are very tolerant," he told reporters after receiving thousands of well-wishers who visited him and his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali to wish them "Selamat Hari Raya Aidilfitri" at their open house in "Seri Perdana" here.

Dr Mahathir said the tradition of visiting one another among the Malays, Chinese and Indians during their festive celebrations was a unique feature rarely found in other countries.

"In Malaysia, we find that the Chinese and Indians wishing "Selamat Hari Raya" to the Malays during Hari Raya and similarly during Chinese New Year, the Malays and Chinese wish Gongxi Fa Cai and for Deepavali, we hear the Malays and Chinese saying Happy Deepavali.

"This is something we can be proud of as they are ordinary folks and they are very friendly (to one another)," he said.

Dr Mahathir said only those who do not accept the Malaysian culture would harbour negative feelings about the tradition of visiting one another.

"Only those who could not accept the Malaysian culture think that the diverse cultures of the Malays, Chinese and Indians have been mixed up and as though it is something not good." he said.

Dr Mahathir said the people should be grateful for Malaysia to have such uniqueness.

"Just now, Chinese children were wearing Malay dress, Indian children also wore Malay dress. These are the true Malaysians," he said.

Describing the tradition of welcoming people from various races during the Hari Raya open house as "a beautiful experience", Dr Mahathir said he felt happy to see a larger crowd of people coming to wish him "Selamat Hari Raya" this year as compared to last year.

"... and something which was particularly interesting was many of the Chinese and Indians ask their children to wish Selamat Hari Raya Aidilfitri, shake hands and kiss the hand. Some even gave personal message," he said.

Dr Mahathir was also asked on the guests and foreign tourists who visited him.

"All of them expressed their happiness to see this unique experience which they said had never happen in their own country.

"They were impressed by this situation and wanted to record it to take back to show to their people and friends at home," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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