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Messages-Mahathir

TOLERANCE WILL ENSURE SUCCESS FOR ALL- DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 3 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Malaysians can take pride in their long standing spirit of tolerance which has brought success to the country.

The Prime Minister said even though the country's administration was led by Muslims, the government had never restricted the followers of other religions from practising their faith or cultures.

"In fact minorities in Malaysia are a very fortunate lot," Dr Mahathir said in his message to mark Chinese New Year which falls on Saturday.

He said Malaysians of various races and religions were a rational people who valued peace and harmony among them.

"Celebrations to mark the Year of the Dragon will no doubt be more joyful and meaningful this time not only because it is being observed in the new millennium but also because the country is now free from economic pressures," Dr Mahathir said.

Malaysians should be thankful that their country was not very badly affected by the economic downturn which hit the region as most of them were still able to lead a comfortable life, he said.

"Nevertheless we should learn from this incident as we have seen the destruction it had brought to certain other countries," Dr Mahathir said.

The Prime Minister and Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali wished all Malaysian Chinese "Selamat Tahun Baru."

MCA President Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik was happy that the Chinese community had played a positive role in helping the government revive the economy.

Even though the economy was gaining strength, the people should continue to support and cooperate with the government in its efforts to implement the various policies for the good of the country, he said.

"I hope Malaysians will continue to strengthen their unity and value the social stability and peace which we have been enjoying so long," Dr Ling said.

Gerakan President Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik urged Chinese Malaysians to continue to work harder and more closely with the government to explore the great potentials of the new century.

"The recent economic crisis seemed to be a gargantuan challenge. However the government together with the support of the people has managed to overcome such odds."

"Although we can take pride in having achieved a lot, we must take steps to do even more and do it better," he said.

He said the overwhelming mandate given by Chinese Malaysians for the Barisan Nasional in last year's general election was a sign that they wanted the nation to continue to be forward-looking, progressive, democratic, stable and harmonious.

-- BERNAMA

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