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Let's hold fast to Malaysian formula, PM urges people

Abdul Razak Ahmad

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - The Prime Minister today expressed the hope that Malaysians will hold fast to the Malaysian formula and refrain from making unreasonable demands as they usher in the New Year.

"Let us return to moderation and tolerance which has brought peace and prosperity to us and our country," the Prime Minister said in his New Year's message.

Dr Mahathir said the concept of 'give and take' between the races which was created by the country's founding fathers - Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra, Tun Tan Siew Sin and Tun V.T. Sambanthan - was most efficacious for Malaysia.

He said all in Malaysia could live in peace and harmony because the leaders of the various races in Malaysia who not only fought for the country's independence but also drew up the nation's basic policies were moderates who wanted to see all races receive their due in this country.

"They were not extremists and were very considerate. They rejected pressures from extremists within their races and chose to treat the rights of all races fairly," Dr Mahathir said.

He added that this wisdom of past leaders was not something which all the rakyat understood.

"Because of this, the May 13th, 1969 incident occurred."

The Prime Minister said although policies for an equitable distribution of wealth were put in place afterwards through the New Economic Policy, the situation in Malaysia was still not "ideal" as the various races had not fully integrated.

Furthermore, he said, although targets specified by the NEP were not fully met, the economic gap between the Malays and other races had narrowed.

Dr Mahathir said although there were groups which did not receive special treatment, "their success has exceeded targets because those who are smart and possess capital cannot be stopped from progressing.

On the other hand, the country's twin founding tenets - peace and stability - are the determinant factors of success.

"No matter how wealthy a nation, no matter how adept and intelligent its populace, development cannot take place without peace and stability," Dr Mahathir said.

"So believe that if we continue to hold upon the formula which was created by our country's founders half a century ago, then we will still be able to make a success of Vision 2020," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the country's development was conducted within an atmosphere of unity among the races.

Retracing the nation's achievements, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia had achieved increased world recognition due to its successful hosting of international events such as the recent Formula One race and the 1998 Commonwealth Games.

He also mentioned some of the country's world-class business successes, citing Petronas as an example of a company which had succeeded internationally.

"No other national petroleum company is active in prospecting and producing oil outside of its own country," he said, adding that Petronas was extracting petroleum in Vietnam, Syria and Sudan, and laying gas and petroleum pipelines up to Argentina.

Petronas, he said, had once been listed as the most profitable petroleum company in the world in a Fortune 500 publication.

He said although some Malaysians might be bored listening to the country's successes being recounted and regard them as normal, it was not so.

Dr Mahathir said the imbalance in the level of development among the different races made Malaysia a difficult country to develop.

"This is because development must be accompanied by attempts to balance the progress of all races so that no one would feel marginalised.

"These efforts need to be done without seizing the wealth of any race for distribution to the poorer races. Instead, distribution should be done from an expanded economic pie," he said.

Stressing that Malaysia's recipe for success was something that could not be replicated, the Prime Minister called on those bent upon imposing their group's demands to consider the implications of their actions.

He said the Government was not prepared to destroy what Malaysians of all races had built together simply because there was a group which demanded everything for its own race.

Dr Mahathir said this was the reason why the Government could not fulfil demands by any group which wanted everything it regarded as its right.

"If we pay heed (to these demands), there will be an imbalance which will threaten national stability," Dr Mahathir said.

He cited the example of those who attempted to obtain their demands through armed revolt and the capture, torture and murder of those who were of a different religion.

"They forgot that the Malayan Communist terrorists had attempted in vain for 43 years, from 1948 to 1990, to overthrow the Malaysian Government.

"Did these people believe that with their small team they would succeed? Were they certain that the people would support their acts of violence?"

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