

04 FEB 2001

Mahathir-Festival

MALAYSIA WILL REMAIN PEACEFUL AND PROGRESSIVE

PENANG, Feb 4 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight that Malaysians have proven that the country will remain peaceful and progressive because the people love peace and are tolerant of one another.

In fact, the Prime Minister said Malaysia, despite its multi-racial society, had proven wrong the predictions made when Malaysia attained independence that the country would not survive and achieve peace and prosperity.

"We have proven to the world that we are peace loving, tolerant of one another, and able to participate in one another's festivals," he said in his speech at the first Malaysia Open House in conjunction with the national-level Chinese New Year celebrations, here.

"We proved to the world that we love peace, tolerant of each other, can celebrate each other's festival together," he said.

He said although Malaysia is made up of three major races -- Malays, Chinese and Indians and 34 other ethnic groups in Sabah and Sarawak -- they can live in peace and harmony.

According to him, the tradition of celebrating together the festivals of the various races in the country had become a part of the Malaysian tradition.

Dr Mahathir said the federal government planned to make the Chinese New Year, Hari Raya Aidilfitri, Deepavali, Keamatan, Gawai and Christmas as national open house celebrations.

He said this was to enable every race in the country to know one another and to eliminate prejudice against other people, like the Malay saying "Tak Kenal Maka Tak Cinta" or if you did not know about other people, you would not love them.

As the leader of the nation chosen through the general election, he called on all races such as the Malays, Chinese, Indians, Bajaus, Kadazans and Ibans to work together to develop the country.

"So let us work together for our country to achieve greatness by year 2020 to be a developed nation," he added.

-- BERNAMA

AHM AO