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People reminded about preserving harmony

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - Reminding the people of the importance of preserving racial harmony, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the existing situation would spur the country's development.

Speaking at the Winter Solstice Festival at Stadium Putra, Bukit Jalil, tonight, Dr Mahathir praised Malaysians for their racial and religious tolerance which had transformed Malaysia into a progressive nation.

Citing events like Hari Raya Aidilfitri, Deepavali, Chinese New Year and Christmas, he said they demonstrated their solidarity by joining in the celebrations regardless of race and religion.

"By joining in the celebrations, we will be able to understand each other's religion, culture and custom.

"This is Malaysia... this is your country... this is our country... let us work together to develop this country. Let us turn it into a developed country in 2020," he said.

In a certain country, Dr Mahathir said, when the world economy suffered, the situation in their countries worsened.

"The people rioted... they looted supermarkets and hypermarkets because prices of goods became unaffordable but here we are still able to spend during festive seasons," he added.

Dong Zhi, which is celebrated on Dec 22, is a time for thanksgiving as families reflect on the blessings of the past year and pray for prosperity in the next.

Families celebrate the occasion by making tang yuen, or glutinous rice flour balls, which symbolise unity and harmony, and offering them to deities and ancestors during prayers.

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