

31 MAY 2001

Mahathir-Gawai

REALISING NATIONAL ASPIRATIONS REQUIRES SACRIFICES BY COMMUNITIES

KUALA LUMPUR, May 31 (Bernama) -- All Malaysian communities, be they a majority or a minority component, will have to make sacrifices to help the government realise national aspirations, said the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

While advising them not to be pre-occupied with only their own community, Dr Mahathir said whatever their actions, their utmost consideration should be for the overall good of society.

"Our tolerant nature has enabled us to preserve inter-racial harmony and unity. Any community, big or small, definitely has a place and equal rights guaranteed by the government," Dr Mahathir said in his message to mark the Gawai Dayak tomorrow.

It is the Dayak's main festival especially in Sarawak to mark the first day of harvesting.

Dr Mahathir said for a multiracial Malaysia, peace and stability derived from a united and harmonious citizenry were a prerequisite for the government to bring about prosperity to the nation.

All communities in the country be they Malays, Chinese, Indians, Dayaks, Ibans or others are free to practise their own religions, cultures, customs and speak their own languages without fear of suppression.

"There is no need for us to feel small or marginalised only because we are from a minority community," he said.

Dr Mahathir said while Gawai Dayak is a religious festival or based on the beliefs of a particular ethnic group, it is now being celebrated by Malaysians of all races.

Once confined to Sarawak only, it is now featured on the cultural events of other states in Malaysia as well, the prime minister said.

"This is where the uniqueness of our country and of multi-racial, multi-lingual, multi-cultural and multi-religious Malaysians lies. We mutually respect and accept each other's cultural differences," he said.

Dr Mahathir urged Malaysians to make the most of Gawai Dayak to visit one another and strengthen unity.

-- BERNAMA

MAM ES RYN