

30 DEC 2002

618 ROAD ACCIDENTS, 15 FATALITIES IN JUST ONE DAY

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 30 (Bernama) -- Fifteen deaths were reported on the ninth day of 'Ops Sikap' Phase Two yesterday compared to 17 deaths two days ago caused by road accidents.

Bukit Aman Traffic Department press statement said this brought the total number of road accident fatalities to 157 since the operation began on Dec 20.

There were eight fatalities on federal roads, four on town roads, two on state roads and one on the highway.

However, road accidents reported yesterday had decreased from 664 cases two days ago to 618 cases yesterday.

Most accident cases yesterday occurred on town roads with 304 cases, federal roads - 162 cases, state roads - 87 cases, highways - 35 cases, and other roads - 30 cases.

'Ops Sikap' Phase Two, launched for the Christmas and New Year celebrations, would end on Jan 6, 2003.

--BERNAMA

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Mahathir-Success

ENSURING M'SIA IS SAFE IS MAJOR SUCCESS FOR 2002, SAYS PM

PUTRAJAYA, Dec 30 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that Malaysia's ability in proving to the world that the country is safe, dispelling adverse predictions against it, is among the nation's achievements to be proud of in 2002.

He said that the people should also be proud of the nation's ability in developing its economy throughout the year.

"For 2003, the priority for Malaysia is to ensure peace and security in the country. We should also strive to enhance economic success and certainly we should be prepared in the event of any untoward incidents in our country," he told reporters after recording his New Year's message to be aired by RTM, here.

Dr Mahathir was asked for his assessment on the country's success in 2002 and his hopes for the following year.

The Prime Minister said that the government would continue to give attention to the country's problems like issues pertaining to education which according to him had been used by the opposition.

He said that this was the reason why the government was no longer providing assistance to the sekolah agama rakyat (SAR) as such schools fail to impart the true teachings of Islam and instead incite students into hating the government.

"There is no reason why we should assist them, who, when they grow up know little about gratitude and being thankful," he said.

Besides that, Dr Mahathir also criticized certain groups and parties making unreasonable demands like staging protests over rubbish disposal.

Referring to the demonstration by the residents of Broga, Semenyih, against the location of an incinerator there instead of in Puchong as proposed earlier, he said that nobody would agree to having a rubbish

disposal near where they live.

"All of them protested. If we cannot dispose of rubbish, we'll have to leave the rubbish collected by the people where they are...at their houses, as there are no other places to dispose of the rubbish.

"The people then cannot complain why the rubbish has not been collected, because we have no place for garbage disposal...cannot burn, cannot keep, cannot do anything, so we'll just leave them there."

Commenting on racial unity in the country, Dr Mahathir said that there was no problem in this respect, judging from the atmosphere during the festive season.

"We can see this especially in the (national) celebrations for Aidilfitri in Jitra and (Christmas) in Melaka. Some 200,000 people came together in peace and harmony, there was no aggression," he said.

Asked whether his move to step down as Prime Minister should be emulated by other Barisan Nasional component party leaders who were his contemporary to give way to second echelon leaders, he said: "That's up to them. I'm not asking others to follow what I do."

-- BERNAMA

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