

13 APR 2002

Mahathir-Vasakhi

PRIME MINISTER, DR SITI HASMAH EXTEND VASAKHI GREETINGS

KUALA LUMPUR, April 13 (Bernama) -- The Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, today extended Vasakhi Day greetings to the Malaysian Sikh community.

In his message on the occasion of Vasakhi Day, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was a most fortunate multi-racial country where religion and custom did not pose any problem.

"We are able to observe together various different celebrations in the spirit of unity. This has made our people and country richer in culture and this has very much amazed foreigners who never realised that different races can live peacefully together," he said.

In this diversity, people were able to practise deep mutual respect for the different cultures and customs of the various communities in this country, the Prime Minister said.

This understanding had moulded a Malaysian community with a high degree of tolerance which had indeed contributed much to Malaysia's success as a nation state, Dr Mahathir said.

"There are not many countries where people of different race, religion, language and culture are able to live together in peace and tranquility. Usually such a situation will be unstable and it will be difficult to achieve progress."

The Prime Minister said even though the majority of Malaysians were Muslim, people of other religions were always free to practise their respective faiths.

"In Malaysia there is no obstruction in the way of anyone practising his own culture, let alone oppression of any race. We are grateful that the majority of our people are always moderate in whatever action they take. Malaysians do realise that any form of extremism will not bring any good," Dr Mahathir said.

Dr Mahathir said despite being a minority in Malaysia, the achievement of the Sikhs in various professional fields was indeed a pride to the country.

This clearly showed that in Malaysia the opportunity for anyone to pursue success had no limit provided the person was willing to work hard, he said.

"Today, Malaysian Sikhs are celebrating Vesakhi Day together with other races in peace and happiness. Vasakhi is an important celebration of the Sikhs, a day of purification and alms giving for the good of humanity," the Prime Minister said.

Dr Mahathir hoped all Malaysians would join in the celebrations so that the Sikh community would not feel that they were a minority.

-- BERNAMA

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