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Leaders hope for continued prosperity under Abdullah

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - In wishing Muslims Selamat Hari Raya, many leaders also expressed hope that Malaysia will continue to prosper under Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

In Kuching, Sarawak Yang di-Pertua Negeri Tun Abang Muhammad Salahuddin Abang Barieng hoped Malaysia will prosper, be stable and united under Abdullah.

He said Malaysia had developed much under Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad who retired as Prime Minister on Oct 31 this year after 22 years in office.

In his Hari Raya message, Muhammad Salahuddin said Malaysians, including the people of Sarawak, should be proud that the change in the country's leadership was smooth and full of discipline.

He said it showed how democracy had brought about unity and racial harmony among the people of various ethnic groups and cultures.

Muhammad Salahuddin was also grateful that Sarawak was chosen to host the national level Hari Raya Open House in Kuching on Dec 13.

Social activist Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye said Malaysians of all races should celebrate Hari Raya to strengthen ties and promote harmony in society, Lee, who is also chairman of the Malaysian Crime Prevention Foundation, said people should continue the tradition of holding open houses, which have become part of Malaysian culture.

Open house helps to foster good relations and understanding among the races, he said.

In Kota Kinabalu, Chief Minister Datuk Musa Aman has called on all Malaysians in Sabah to strengthen unity and reject negative elements.

He said the tradition of holding open house and exchanging visits during Hari Raya would help strengthen unity and understanding among the people.

Musa also called on the people to take the occasion to ponder over what Sabah has achieved over the years, and to pledge to work even harder to improve their quality of life.

He said Sabah was lucky to have a Barisan Nasional Government with leaders who are responsible and truly committed to the welfare of the people.

Meanwhile, the Yang di-Pertua Negeri Tun Ahmadshah Abdullah said all Malaysians, regardless of race, religion and political leanings, should take the Hari Raya as an opportunity to visit one another to seek forgiveness for past mistakes and transgression.

"Such praiseworthy practice which has become a tradition during major celebrations in our country is an excellent way to strengthen goodwill and tolerance," he said.

In Seremban, Muslims have been urged to reflect upon the responsibility and role they play towards themselves, their family, society and the country during the Hari Raya Aidilfitri celebrations this year.

Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohd Isa Abdul Samad, in his Hari Raya message, said there were many challenges facing Muslims worldwide.

He said at a time when Muslims faced negative perceptions, Malaysia had succeeded in becoming a respected country in the global arena.

"As a developing Muslim country, we have become an example to other developing countries.

"We are developed and successful because of the tolerant and united lifestyle we lead with the other major races in the country," he added.

Mohd Isa also urged the people to preserve and uphold the strong ties

between the various races.

"We should continue to celebrate each festival together, as this will keep us united," he said.