

NEW YEAR MESSAGE BY THE PRIME
MINISTER OVER RADIO/TV MALAYSIA
ON 31ST DECEMBER, 1972

Fellow Malaysians,

In a few hours from now, we bid farewell to the old year and welcome in the new. Another year has gone by even as I am speaking to you from this room, all over the nation Malaysians of all walks of life await expectantly for the chimes bringing in the new year 1973.

It is not so much my intention tonight to address you with a formal message, but instead to invite you all to join me in a moment of reflection, reassessing our performance and sharing the joy of our achievements during the past year.

Looking in retrospect, I am happy to say that 1972 has been a successful year for us, another year of fruitful endeavour, both on our domestic front and the international arena which earns us the admiration and respect of other nations including the big powers. Our role and contribution to the cause of peace and progress, especially in this region of Southeast Asia, is clear testimony of our sincere desire to help bring about a new world order where every nation, no matter how small shall have the right and freedom to chart her own course and determine her destiny.

It is in this spirit that we welcome the prospects of peace in the Indo China area, and share the hopes and expectations of the long suffering people of Vietnam to build a new life for themselves in an era of enduring peace, freedom and stability.

Fellow Malaysians,

Indeed, this year saw the most significant achievement in our relentless pursuit for national unity, prosperity and progress. We reached a new landmark in our history as a nation, which brings us a step nearer to the ultimate goal of unifying our people of various races and cultures, welding them together with a new Malaysian identity.

Three years have passed since the tragic event of May 1969 and although the painful agonies during the dark days are best forgotten, the trials and tribulations will always remain an object lesson to all of us. However, under the guiding hand of the Almighty, we have survived the most crucial test of history and have since moved forward with greater courage and confidence, inspired and motivated by the Rukunegara.

Today, national consolidation is nearer at hand beginning with the formation of a Coalition Government between the Alliance and SUPP in Sarawak and between the Alliance and Gerakan in Penang and followed suit by Alliance-PPP Coalition in Perak. Only a few days ago we have reached agreement with Parti Islam to form a coalition at state and federal levels. Thus, with the alignment of the major political parties, representing a large segment of Malaysians, dedicated to national unity and harmony, we are now closer to the concept of a national front which in due course become a durable foundation for a strong, united multiracial Malaysian nation. I would like to describe this as a unique and epoch making achievement in our political life, and is most gratifying to me personally as it took place during our life time. We can thus look forward to a new era of political stability which will provide an environment in which our people of various races will develop their talent and skill and prepare themselves for the bright future ahead.

Fellow Malaysians,

Lest there be any misapprehension, I would like to make it very clear here that the concept of a national front is neither inimical nor contradictory to our faith and adherence to the basic principles of democracy. But, while we strongly uphold the sanctity of these principles, especially in respect of freedom of organisation and freedom of speech, we must also agree that in a developing nation like ourselves, too much politicking is neither desirable nor conducive to the attainment of our ultimate national objectives of unity and prosperity of our people.

It is very well for some people to say that a strong opposition is essential to our democratic way of life. Indeed, democratic opposition might be a laudable thing in itself, particularly in the long-established traditions of a stable and homogeneous society:

But, in our Malaysian society of today, where racial manifestations are very much in existence, any form of politicking is bound to follow along racial lines and will only enhance the divisive tendencies among our people and thereby become an impediment to the nation's progress. In my view, it is far too dangerous to allow free rein of criticism against principles which are already entrenched in the Constitution and against National policies which are intended to bring about National unity and which have the support of a great majority of our people. However, we would welcome constructive suggestions with regard to their implementation in order that we are always fair and just to all sections of our community.

It is most gratifying to find the same spirit of understanding and national consciousness among the leaders of Parti Gerakan, the PPP and Parti Islam, who are prepared to place national interest over and above partisan politics. The link of unity has been forged to enable us to march together hand-in-hand towards achieving our common aims and objectives of eradicating poverty from the face of the Nation and restructuring our Malaysian society to meet the challenges and needs of this modern age of science and technology. I would like to place on record my sincere appreciation to our National leaders and to our people for their dedication and devotion to the cause of unity and progress.

Fellow Malaysians,

The new year will bring new hopes and expectations among our people. The current development Plan incorporating the New Economic Policy will enter its third year of implementation and I have already instructed to have a mid-term review so that we will be able to rectify any shortcomings and, at the same time, prepare the groundwork for the subsequent Development Plan.

In view of the current development, I have announced some changes in the Government which will take effect as from tomorrow. In the minor Cabinet reshuffle, I have appointed Tun Dr. Ismail to the portfolio of Trade and Industry, and in this capacity, he will be responsible for both domestic and foreign trade and for the implementation of our Industrialisation programmes. I am sure you will agree with me that Tun Dr.

Ismail is eminently suited to this additional task where his wide knowledge and long experience will bring a strong impact on the implementation of that vital sector of our national policy.

I have also appointed the leader of Parti Islam, Datuk Haji Mohd. Asri, as Minister responsible for the reconstituted Ministry of Land Development. His portfolio, besides land matters, will also include FELDA and FELCRA. It has been felt that there is urgent need for closer coordination in land policy and administration which under our Constitution are the responsibility of the various State Governments. And as the former Menteri Besar himself, Datuk Asri will be able to apply his valuable experience for a well-coordinated and efficient implementation of Government policy for the benefit of our people.

Fellow Malaysians,

As I said earlier, 1972 has been another good year for us in terms of our economic and social progress. But much has still to be done if we desire to see the attainment of our cherished objectives. Success does not come by itself; it will only be realised through our devotion, dedication and perseverance. We have laid a firm foundation for a new Malaysia where every citizen will have equal right and opportunity to improve his station in life, and thereby make himself a better man in keeping with the requirement of this modern age of science and technology. In the just society that we are now creating, there is opportunity for all and everyone to make himself a truly fitting member of the new Malaysian Society.

Let us together enter the New Year with the courageous spirit of pioneers blazing the trail and laying the foundation for our Nation that will long endure the test of time.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!