



CHINESE NEW YEAR 2024 MESSAGE
FROM
THE RT. HON. PREMIER SARAWAK
DATUK PATINGGI TAN SRI (DR) ABANG HAJI ABDUL
RAHMAN ZOHARI BIN TUN DATUK ABANG HAJI OPENG

EMBARGOED UNTIL 12.00 MIDNIGHT
ON THURSDAY, 8TH FEBRUARY 2024

Salam sejahtera dan
Salam Sarawak Maju Makmur

1. Terlebih dahulu bagi pihak saya sendiri dan juga pihak keluarga, saya ingin mengucapkan Selamat Menyambut Tahun Baru Cina, Gong Xi Fa Cai kepada seluruh masyarakat Cina di Bumi Kenyalang dan di mana jua saudara dan saudari berada yang dapat mendengar atau membaca ucapan saya ini.

Dear friends,

2. 2024 is the Year of the Dragon according to the Chinese zodiac that refers to a cycle of 12 animals, each of the 12 animals denoting each year in the Chinese lunar calendar.

3. I sincerely hope that all our Chinese friends are high in spirit as they enter the year of the dragon that certainly holds a lot of promises and hopes for all Sarawakians as we journey together to transform our beloved Land of the Hornbills into a developed state towards 2030.

4. I was told people born in the Dragon years usually possess natural courage, tenacity, and intelligence, often displaying enthusiasm and confidence.

5. I certainly hope that these are the qualities and traits that we must have as we move forward in 2024 and together make it another successful year for Sarawak.

Dear friends,

6. There are three things that we hope to achieve for Sarawak in 2024 in our ambition to create a wholesome environment for progress and advancement in the State. Now, let me share with you what the three things are that lie ahead as we progress into 2024.

7. Firstly, as you may already be aware of, after 43 years of its establishment we want to take back Bintulu Port from the Federal Government. This is not only because it should be under Sarawak's power according to the constitution but also because Sarawak needs to comprehensively plan its port development that encompasses the whole of Sarawak including its resource-rich hinterland.

8. This is much like taking back Bakun Hydro from the federal authority to enable us to be in control of the power to determine our own power tariff in order to attract investment in energy-intensive industries in Sarawak, especially in the Samalaju Industrial Zone near Bintulu.

9. Secondly, we aspire to have an airline to serve not only our rural areas but also to provide connectivity to selected destinations in the Asian region. We need to invest in creating air linkages between Sarawak and the rest of the region not only to bring in tourists but also to facilitate air travel to boost business and investment in Sarawak. Sarawak is situated on an island and the only way to bring people in is to fly them in. I hope that we can finalize the negotiation with the federal authorities soon and gain control of the airline within this year, God willing.

10. Thirdly, we also aspire to have a major stake in a commercial bank to provide Sarawak a financial platform to boost the economy further through the development of SMEs and entrepreneurship. Sarawak already has some stakes in this particular bank and we want to increase our stake. I am confident that we can conclude the negotiations soon so that we can participate actively in the running of the bank and be able to serve Sarawak's interest well.

11. These are the three strategic platforms that Sarawak should have to create an ecosystem to uplift Sarawak's economy to the next level.

Dear friends,

12. Sarawak's strength lies in its wealth of natural resources that include water and sunlight. We have harnessed about 3.5 gigawatt of our hydro potential with an overall potential of 20 gigawatt. For the future, we would want to change the way of producing hydro power by using energy from running water instead of creating a large reservoir of water that would certainly flood a large area.

13. We also want to harness in a big way the solar energy potential particularly using the floating solar panels in our hydro dam reservoirs.

14. These are renewable resources which we must exploit in accordance with the goals set by the United Nations under the SDG or Social Development Goals that are meant not only to boost the economy as measured by the growth of GDP but also to benefit the people across the board.

15. The GDP figures do not always present a true picture of the wealth and social progress of a country thus prompting the formation of a special commission in the West in 2008 to examine how the wealth and social progress of a nation could be measured rather than relying on the uni-dimensional GDP.

16. The commission's report has led to the adoption of the SDG by the UN that has been the basis the Post Covid-19 Development Strategy 2030 (PCDS 2030) formulation as a roadmap for Sarawak's development towards 2030.

17. The PCDS 2030 therefore aligns well with the SDG where economic prosperity must benefit everyone irrespective of race and religion while also giving emphasis to the sustainability of our environment.

Dear friends,

18. The progressive environment of our economic development in the last few years is quite evident as businesses, corporate figures, banks and foreign envoys continue to come calling to express their interest to collaborate with Sarawak.

19. Last year has been a good year where we achieved a few things that we have planned, notably the setting of our Sarawak Sovereign and Future Wealth Fund (SSWF) with an initial seed capital of RM8 billion and progressive yearly appropriation of between RM400 million to RM600 million until 2034 from the Sarawak government.

20. The seed capital will be invested in the relevant portfolios as determined by the Board of Guardians that comprise international monetary figures so that the fund will grow and increase our savings. The fund's board will report to the Dewan Undangan Negeri

with provision that there's no withdrawal for the next 20 years under normal circumstances.

21. We are able to set up the SSWF because Sarawak has quite a strong saving and our revenue continues to rise to record figures. Last year Sarawak's revenue stood at RM13.3 billion and I believe it will continue to rise next year, and in the years ahead, as our economy continues to strengthen.

Dear friends,

22. As Premier, what I want to tell our Chinese friends and fellow Sarawakians is that the environment now is conducive for business to flourish and our beloved Sarawak is quite on its way to achieve a developed state status by 2030. With our political stability and social cohesiveness, I am confident we can achieve that, Insyallah.

23. Let us not dwell on trivialities but always look at the bigger picture to enable Sarawak to stand tall as a strong economic force in Malaysia and in the region.

24. Finally, let me once again wish all our Chinese friends Gong Xi Fa Cai. May the year of the dragon be another successful year for Sarawak and for all of us.

25. Semoga saudara dan saudari bergembira di samping ahli keluarga, sahabat handai dan kawan-kawan yang datang berkunjung untuk sama-sama meraikan Tahun Baru Cina pada tahun ini.

26. Gong Xi Fa Cai, Xin Nian Kuai Le.

Terima kasih.