

KUALA LUMPUR, MAY 15 (BERNAMA) — A FIVE-YEAR-LONG TEST OF HIS METTLE, HIS ABILITIES AND APTITUDES, HIS ACCEPTANCE BY ALL MALAYSIANS, IS OVER. DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD HAS PASSED WITH FLYING COLOURS, AND IS POISED TO BE THE NEXT PRIME MINISTER. HIS ERA SHOULD SEE THE NATION ACHIEVING GOALS FOR WHICH, WHEN HE FIRST ESPOUSED THEM, HE WAS BRANDED AN +ULTRA, EXTREMIST AND RACIALIST+ — FOR IDEAS WHICH WERE ONLY TOO FAR AHEAD OF THEIR TIME.

HE HAD CALLED FOR MALAYSIAN SOCIETY TO BE RESTRUCTURED SO THAT BUMIPUTRAS HAVE A MORE MEANINGFUL STAKE; HE HAD URGED THAT POVERTY, ESPECIALLY IN THE RURAL AREAS, BE ERADICATED; HE HAD WANTED NATIONAL UNITY TO BE FORGED THROUGH A SINGLE LANGUNK BAHASA MALAYSIA.

THESE HAVE NOW BEEN ACCEPTED BY MALAYSIANS AT ALL LEVELS — WHAT WERE ONCE HERESY TO THEM ARE NOW ACCEPTED FACTS OF LIFE, REALISTIC OBJECTIVES.

SO MANY OTHER IDEAS OF HIS, INCLUDING ONE FOR +RICE ESTATES+ TO MAKE SMALLHOLDINGS MORE VIABLE, ARE ONLY NOW SEEING REALISATION.

HE WILL TAKE OVER THE NATION'S LEADERSHIP AT A TIME WHEN HIS LINE OF THINKING AND THAT OF OTHER MALAYSIANS AS A WHOLE ARE CONGRUENT. — BERNAMA MORE 1730/A1

MAHATHIR-PROFILE 2 KUALA LUMPUR

MANY STILL REMEMBER THE SHOCK THAT REVERBERATED FROM DATUK HUSSEIN ONN'S SELECTION OF DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR AS HIS NO. 2, EVEN SEVERAL BARISAN NASIONAL LEADERS FOUND IT HARD TO DIGEST.

BUT HIS QUALITIES AND LEADERSHIP STYLE WERE SOON APPARENT — A PRAGMATIC, OUTSPOKEN MAN WHO SEES HIS RESPONSIBILITIES CLEARLY AND EXECUTES THEM FIRMLY, DECISIVELY. HE TOLERATES NO NONSENSE. WHILE BEING DEPUTY PREMIER, HE ALSO HELD THE EDUCATION PORTFOLIO AND LATER, TRADE AND INDUSTRY.

THE EDUCATION SYSTEM SAW SIGNIFICANT EXPANSION AND IMPROVEMENT; ADMINISTRATION OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS WAS STANDARDISED; DISCIPLINE AMONG STUDENTS MORE STRICTLY ENFORCED; THE TEACHERS' LOT IMPROVED.

THERE WAS A SURGE OF FOREIGN INVESTMENT INTO MALAYSIA; THE COUNTRY'S INDUSTRIAL BASE DIVERSIFIED AND EXPANDED; HEAVY INDUSTRIES HAVE BEGUN TO GAIN A STAKE IN THE ECONOMY; BUMIPUTRA PARTICIPATION IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES WAS ACCELERATED THROUGH VARIOUS SCHEMES AND INCENTIVES; THE MALAYSIAN ECONOMY HAD BECOME THE ENVY OF EVEN SEVERAL DEVELOPED NATIONS. — BERNAMA MORE 1734/A1

NO85: (F)
MAHATHIR - PROFILE 3 KUALA LUMPUR

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR WAS ONLY 20 WHEN HE BECAME ACTIVE IN POLITICS. AT WAR'S END HE WAS SECRETARY OF THE KEDAH MALAY UNION AND JOINED UMNO SOON AFTER DATUK HUSSEIN'S FATHER, DATUK ONN JAAFAR, FOUNDED IT IN 1946.

IN THOSE PRE-INDEPENDENCE DAYS HE WROTE NEWSPAPER ARTICLES ON THE PLIGHT OF THE POOR, THE RURAL FOLK, THE LESS PRIVILEGED. A KEDAH BOY, HE STUDIED MEDICINE IN SINGAPORE AND SERVED IN HIS HOME STATE FOR FOUR YEARS BEFORE ENTERING PRIVATE PRACTICE IN 1957.

HE WON THE KOTA STAR SEAT TO BECOME AN MP IN 1964, AND A YEAR LATER BECAME AN UMNO SUPREME COUNCIL MEMBER.

THE 1969 GENERAL ELECTION WHICH SAW THE EROSION OF THE NICV JS HOLD OVER THE ELECTORATE ALSO COST DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR HIS SEAT.

HIS BRASH OUTSPOKENESS ON MATTERS WHICH WERE THEN CONSIDERED TOO SENSITIVE LED TO HIS EXPULSION FROM UMNO THE SAME YEAR.

TWO AND A HALF YEARS SAW A MORE SUAVE MAHATHIR REJOINING UMNO UNDER TUN ABDUL RAZAK'S LEADERSHIP. HE WAS RETURNED TO THE SUPREME COUNCIL WITH THE HIGHEST MEMBER OF VOTES IN THAT YEAR'S GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

HE WAS APPOINTED A SENATOR IN DECEMBER 1972 AND MADE CHAIRMAN OF FIMA (FOOD INDUSTRIES OF MALAYSIA SDN BHD), A GOVERNMENT-OWNED COMPANY. — BERNAMA MORE 1739/A1

NO86: (F)
MAHATHIR - PROFILE 4 KUALA LUUMPUR

HE WON UNOPPOSED IN KUBANX PASU TO RETURN TO THE DEWAN RAKYAT IN 1974 AND BECAME EDUCATWON MINISTER IN TUN RAZAK'S FIRST BARISAN NASIONAL CABINET.

+ I WILL TRY TO DO A GOOD JOB — FOR ALL MALAYSIANS, + HE SAID AFTER ASSUMING OFFICE.

HE WAS ELECTED AN UMNO VICE-PRESIDENT IN 1975 ANDLA YEAR LATER STEPPED UP TO BECOME ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT AND DEPUTY PREMIER.
— BERNAMA 1741/A1

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