

PUT NATION ABOVE ALL, PEOPLE TOLD

(P) Mahathir
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At the Dewan Rakyat yesterday

Reporters: I. RAJESWARY and T.S. CHONG

THE Prime Minister has called upon the people to give priority to national interests and strengthen their unity to make Malaysia a more prosperous, united and peaceful nation.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said as the nation strived towards achieving those objectives, the people must not be complacent to the threats posed by elements bent on disrupting their zeal and determination.

Efforts towards achieving such objectives became all the more difficult in a multi-racial country where there were groups making use of political, religious and communal issues to attain their own selfish interests, he pointed out.

The Prime Minister was tabling a motion of congratulations and pledge of loyalty to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong on the occasion of His Majesty's installation on Thursday.

He said the people should be alert to the threat from those who deliberately seek to curb their efforts to build a peaceful, prosperous and united nation.

Dr Mahathir said the country needed the people's undivided loyalty to face these challenges.

He said this loyalty was critical because many quarters were making use of political, racial and religious issues for their own ends in our multi-racial country.

It was vital therefore for the people to strengthen unity and placed the interests of the nation first, he stressed.

Dr Mahathir said the King was the integral head of the parliamentary system and of the constitutional monarchy.

The King was also the symbol of unity and focus of loyalty for the entire people, he added.

The Prime Minister said

he was confident that the Government and the people would benefit from the rule of such a knowledgeable and experienced King who always had their interest at heart.

Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Dr Neo Yee Pan said the people's joyous response to the King's installation showed the country's commitment to the twin pillars of parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy.

Echoing the Prime Minister's message, Dr Neo warned the people to be vigilant against forces who tried to split them.

The MCA acting president said these enemies were not only bent on creating a chasm between the races but also within the communities by instigating intra-community disputes.

Although the situation was not critical, Dr Neo said, the people should be careful to preserve the democratic way of life.

Supporting the motion, Opposition Leader Lim Kit Siang (DAP — Kota Melaka) prayed for a more united, strong and just Malaysia

under His Majesty's rule.

The DAP secretary-general said the King and Queen had won the hearts of the people from all races and all walks of life by their approachability and interest in the welfare of the people.

They had also made history as the first monarchs to donate their allowances for the entire five year term to establish an educational foundation, he said.

The foundation totalling \$3.8 million would improve educational and academic standards in the country, Mr Lim added.

Encik Daud Datuk Haji Taha (BN — Batu Pahat) hit out at the PAS allegations that the King's directive to cancel the PAS-Umno debate was due to the influence of Umno.

The King, he said, was a wise and able Ruler and did not need advice from any party.

Moreover, he pointed out, the powers over Islamic affairs rested with the King.

Encik Daud said it was sad to note that the PAS representatives had failed to attend both the installation ceremony as well as the

session to congratulate the King on his installation.

Encik Daud also criticised the DAP for not attending the King's installation ceremony.

Although the opposition did not want to wear the required uniform for the ceremony, he said, they should not avoid it since they were required to do so only once in five years.

Primary Industries Minister Datuk Paul Leong called on his fellow MPs as representatives of the people to work towards the unity of the country's multi-racial community.

Only, then, he said, could they preserve peace and prosperity in the nation.

In supporting the motion, Datuk Leong, the Gerakan deputy president, said the King had also ensured protection and tolerance towards those who embraced other religions.

The King, he said, was a public-spirited monarch and Malaysia would enjoy continued peace and prosperity under his reign.

Deputy Housing Minister and MIC deputy president S. Subramaniam said the King had shown himself to be a leader and an excellent advisor to the people and he was confident His Majesty would be a source of inspiration to them.

Other party leaders who spoke in support of the motion included Energy, Telecommunications and Posts Minister Datuk Leo Moggie (Party Bangsa Dayak Sarawak), Rantau Panjang MP Hassan Haji Mohamed (Hamim), Culture, Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Dr Sulaiman Daud (PBB), Justice Minister Datuk Dr James Ongkili (Berjaya) and Science, Technology and the Environment Ministry Parliamentary Secretary Law Dien Heng (SUPP).

The motion was adopted unanimously.