

PM's thanks for summit success

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. — The Prime Minister tonight thanked those who had devoted time and energy, contributed ideas and made personal sacrifices to make the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting a Malaysian success.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said although it was impossible to name all involved, the success of CHOGM was something to be proudly shared by all.

"Nobody can say one contributed more than the other. Everybody gave their time, sometimes beyond normal office hours and some made personal sacrifices like not seeing their spouses and families for days.

"Even the private sector came up to contribute."

Dr Mahathir, who was given a standing ovation upon his arrival at a dinner hosted by him for CHOGM, said he had received highly complimentary remarks from Commonwealth leaders, foreign journalists and Japanese diplomats on the meeting.

He said Japanese diplomats had remarked that the preparations for the funeral of the late Emperor Hirohito were not as elaborate as Malaysia's hosting of the Commonwealth meet.

He also narrated how he had recently received a let-

ter from a veteran journalist, George Ivan Smith, who had covered CHOGM since 1964, which stated that the meeting was the best he had attended.

Dr Mahathir said that he was deeply moved by the willingness of Malaysians to help the Government host CHOGM here.

He mentioned retired Government servants who volunteered their services to welcome Commonwealth leaders at the airport, wives of civil servants who had nothing to do with their husbands' CHOGM duties but became ladies-in-waiting for the spouses of the visiting leaders and the ordinary public who endured traffic problems during the meeting.

The Prime Minister said he had harboured fears that Malaysians might not be able to rise to the challenge of hosting such a large international meeting when he announced Malaysia's successful bid to host CHOGM two years ago.

However, these fears faded when he saw the spirit and dedication of the staff involved when the Government started preparations for the meeting two years ago.

Dr Mahathir urged CHOGM staff to use the successful hosting of the event as a lesson on how Malaysians could succeed if they worked together.