

PM pays tribute to former statesmen

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today paid tribute to the country's three former Prime Ministers, saying that the people should appreciate their leadership, sacrifices and deeds.

Malaysians can today be proud that the country practises democracy with the leaders being elected due to the sacrifices of the former leaders, the Prime Minister said.

Dr Mahathir was launching the commemorative stamps of the three former Prime Ministers — Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra, Tun Abdul Razak and Tun Hussein Onn — at Pusat Islam.

The stamps come in a set of three with a denomination of \$1 each. Each stamp carries a portrait of a former Prime Minister.

Dr Mahathir said the country did not experience riots or violence when there was a change of leaders or Government.

"Malaysia enjoys political

stability and the country has not experienced radical changes in its administrative policies.

"Because of the political stability and a strong Government, the country's economy has experienced rapid growth."

He said no one could deny that the political stability was established and developed by the three former Prime Ministers, especially the late Tunku — the father of independence and Bapa Malaysia.

Dr Mahathir said since the country would be celebrating its 34 years of independence tomorrow, it was appropriate that Malaysians remember the sacrifices and contributions of the three former Prime Ministers.

He said the issuing of the commemorative stamps by the Postal Services Department in honour of the three Prime Ministers was most appropriate.

The people must remem-

ber the Tunku for bringing independence without any bloodshed.

Dr Mahathir said it was during the leadership of the Tunku that Malaysia was formed in 1963 to include Sabah and Sarawak.

Dr Mahathir added that the late Tun Razak was a dynamic and efficient administrator who brought great development, especially to the rural areas.

He said the tremendous development the country experienced during the leadership of Tun Razak made Malaysia well-known internationally and he was appropriately accorded the title of Father of Development.

"His contributions to the outlying areas and the nation earned him the Magsaysay Award."

Dr Mahathir said the late Tun Hussein gave vast opportunities to young politicians to hold key positions in the Government.

"His efforts at uniting the people and ensuring that the various communities live in peace and harmony earned him the title of Father of Unity."

Dr Mahathir said all three leaders were statesmen who possessed a high degree of nationalism in developing the country.

He hoped that the foundations laid by the three statesmen would enable the nation to achieve the desired progress and development.

Dr Mahathir later presented mementos to Tun Hajah Rahah Tan Sri Mohamed Noah (the widow of Tun Razak) and Tun Suhailah Tan Sri Mohamed Noah (the widow of the late Tun Hussein.)

Earlier, Energy, Telecommunications and Posts Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said the Postal Services Department printed the commemorative stamps to coincide with the National Day celebrations.