

24 JUL 1996  
Mahathir-Reaction  
A TRIBUTE TO DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, July 24 (Bernama) -- Political leaders, including from the opposition, were today unanimous in acknowledging the leadership of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, saying he is largely responsible for the transformation, success and progress that the country has undergone.

Parti Melayu Semangat 46 (S46) president Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah echoed the chorus of tribute when he said Dr Mahathir was a leader who had contributed immensely to the country.

"As Prime Minister he stands out as a leader full of ideas, some of which others could not think of...many of them (ideas) have been translated into reality," he said.

He was speaking to reporters after attending a "Premier Luncheon" at the Renaissance Kuala Lumpur Hotel here to mark Dr Mahathir's 15th year in office as Prime Minister.

Among the 600 people present at the reception were Menteri Besar, Chief Ministers, MPs, veteran politicians, leaders of political parties, including the opposition, corporate leaders and senior government officers. The luncheon was organised by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and his Cabinet colleagues.

Tengku Razaleigh said Malaysia had undergone tremendous changes since Dr Mahathir took over the helm.

"I think he is a unique person," he said.

Tengku Razaleigh, a former finance minister, said as an opposition leader it was appropriate for him to give recognition and appreciation where "it is due" to the efforts of Dr Mahathir.

PAS ulama chief Datuk Nik Aziz Nik Mat said his presence at the reception showed that he was happy with Dr Mahathir's administration.

"The invitation extended to the opposition is very meaningful, starting from the anti-nuclear gathering earlier...This can lead to a better atmosphere in ties between the government and opposition," said Nik Aziz, who is Kelantan Menteri Besar.

Nik Aziz hoped that more such gatherings transcending the political divide could be organised to enhance harmony and the spirit of tolerance.

DAP secretary-general Lim Kit Siang said Dr Mahathir had played his role as the Prime Minister.

"All have played their roles, the government has played its role, the Prime Minister has played his role and the opposition also played its role...all doing it for the good of the country," he said.

Former Health Minister Datuk Lee Kim Sai described Dr Mahathir as a man with vision and the skills required to solve controversies, problems and disputes.

In his 15 years at the helm, he had made invaluable contributions to Malaysia, especially his Vision 2020 aimed at making the country fully industrialised, he said.

"He is a man full of ideas and guidance. It is a great success for him," he added. -- BERNAMA

HS YBY