

21 FEB 1997

Mahathir-Deng

MAHATHIR PRAISES DENG AS LEADER WITH BOLD VISION

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 21 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has paid tribute to the late Chinese patriarch Deng Xiaoping as the main architect of China's drive for reforms towards modernisation and the adoption of an "open door" policy.

The Prime Minister said Deng was also responsible for enhancing China's role in the maintenance of world peace and stability.

Calling Deng's death "not only a great loss to China but also to the world", Dr Mahathir said Deng was greatly admired for his efforts.

Dr Mahathir said Deng's innovative approach to China's development through his doctrine of socialism with Chinese characteristics, bold vision and outstanding leadership was fundamental in charting the course of China's dynamic economic development.

"China's burgeoning economy today is testimony of the resounding success of his pragmatic policies," he said in his condolences message to Chinese premier Li Peng released by Wisma Putra today.

"I was sad to hear of the demise of your great leader, His Excellency Mr Deng Xiaoping," Dr Mahathir said.

The Prime Minister said: "His many visits abroad resulted in China's close relations, particularly with her neighbours in the East Asian region."

Dr Mahathir said the people of Malaysia recalled fondly his memorable visit to Malaysia in November 1978 which paved the way for closer bilateral relations and cooperation between Malaysia and China.

"As the nation mourns his passing, may I extend, on behalf of the government and people of Malaysia, our deepest sympathy and heartfelt condolences to Your Excellency and, through you, to members of the bereaved family," he said.

Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, in his letter to Vice-Premier of the State Council and Minister of Foreign Affairs Qian Qichen, also praised Deng for his tremendous contributions to China and for being instrumental in paving the way towards Beijing's economic modernisation reforms.

Abdullah said as an outstanding statesman, Deng had made an important contribution towards regional and international peace and stability.

"His demise would be strongly felt not just by the Chinese people but also by the world community," he said.

"Please accept my sincere condolences on the demise of Mr Deng Xiaoping. I am saddened to learn of his death. Please extend also my personal sympathies to his family members on their bereavement," Abdullah said. -- BERNAMA

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