

25/10/1999

BN pledges peace, unity, prosperity (HL)

Ramlan Said; Sarban Singh; Patvinder Singh
KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Speaking at a packed National Stadium in Bukit Jalil, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tonight said the Barisan Nasional has succeeded in transforming the nation from a backward country into one fast approaching developed nation status.

The Prime Minister, speaking at a grand ceremony to mark the 25th anniversary of the BN said only those who refused to see would fail to acknowledge the tangible achievements of the ruling coalition.

After urging the people to continue to support the Government, Dr Mahathir led leaders of the coalition to take an oath where he declared the BN's continued commitment to lead the nation towards peace and harmony, more progress, stability and unity.

The BN also declared its commitment to uphold the country's Constitution and battle against extremism and narrow beliefs. It promised to defend the country's sovereign rights.

The oath read: "We record our sincere appreciation and thanks to the people for their support and the mandate they have given to us all this while to lead the country to prosperity.

"On this note, the Barisan Nasional, in conjunction with its 25th anniversary, hereby pledges and promises to continue to defend the country's independence and sovereignty, to uphold the Constitution and the principles of Rukun Negara to ensure political stability and unity, so that we can all continue to live in peace and harmony.

"We will strive to continue to develop this country through proper planning and the implementation of policies to bring greater prosperity to the people at all levels and to achieve Vision 2020.

"We will also continue to fight any form of narrow-minded belief, racial extremism and chauvinism for the sake of religion, race and nation.

"We are also committed to uphold the dignity of the race and nation through our achievements and ability to face the challenges in the new millennium so that it would always be respected and emulated by the world.

"Towards this, we aspire to win the trust of the people through deeds and actions so that they will continue to support the Government in realising the country's noble hopes and aspirations."

Dr Mahathir arrived at the stadium in a purple Proton Cabriolet accompanied by his wife, Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali. He was met on arrival by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, BN secretary-general Datuk Seri Mohamed Rahmat and component party leaders.

The flag raising ceremony which followed was carried live over radio and television.

Dr Mahathir listed recent achievements by Malaysian individuals in conquering fear and inferiority complex. N. Mohanadas and M. Magendran were the first Malaysians to reach the summit of Mt Everest on May 23, 1997; 23 Malaysian parachutists made a free-fall jump onto the north pole and landed a Proton Wira, becoming the first team of Asian sky divers to touch down on the Polar cap on April 21, 1998; brothers Justin and Gerard Read became the first Malaysians to trek the last degree to the North Pole on April 19, 1999; and Datuk Azhar Mansor completed his solo voyage round the world on Aug 11, this year.

Other accomplishments included the successful staging of the best-ever Commonwealth Games in September last year and the benchmark hosting of Formula One Grand Prix in Sepang last week.

Dr Mahathir said the country was steadily moving towards developed nation status.

However, he said, some parts of it had already been labelled as such.

"It's not me who said that some places in the country have attained developed status. This is said by foreign tourists. When they arrive in the Federal capital, and having seen the development - the modern infrastructure, tall buildings, excellent facilities, the biggest sports complex in South East Asia - they say that Malaysia should already be categorised as a developed nation," he said.

He said it had always been the Government's intention to develop the entire country but this was not an easy task.

"Many countries have achieved independence like us, but not many of them have attained what we have done," he said.

Earlier, Abdullah, chairman of the night's organising committee, said the BN's clear vision, philosophy and dynamic programmes had united multi-racial Malaysians.

He said people from all walks of life had benefited from the programmes initiated by the 14-member governing coalition.

The BN had managed to build a nation where the people lived in peace and harmony, added Abdullah.

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