

18/08/2000

`Malaysians should feel proud of themselves'

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Malaysians should feel proud as they had played their role in realising the country's achievements and rapid development.

The Prime Minister said all had contributed towards making Malaysia what it was now - from the private sector to government servants, police, army and peace-loving citizens.

"We are now respected by the world for our various achievements. The Jalur Gemilang has been placed on Mount Everest and taken round the world by a sailor from Malaysia. All these and many more are done for the country, Kerana Mu Malaysia," he said when launching the Merdeka Month celebrations at Dataran Merdeka.

The theme of this year's 43rd National Day celebrations is Kerana Mu Malaysia.

Among those present were Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir, Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein and his deputy Datuk Ong Tee Keat.

Dr Mahathir recounted the days when many thought Malaysia was part of India because of the Himalayas or the country was in Africa because Malawi was one of the countries in the continent.

Although Malaysia only attained independence 43 years ago after hundreds of years of colonisation, he said it had managed to move forward to become the most rapidly developing country in the world, debunking the belief that Malaysians did not possess the capability to administer the country.

"All these are made possible by sound policies and the ability of the people to control their nafsu (temptations to make unreasonable demands) and willingness to share everything. Since we cannot get everything that we want, some sacrifices are needed."

He said the people accepted the need for a fair distribution of the country's wealth, with assistance given to those lagging behind, but not at the expense of other races.

He said as a result racial tensions were contained and the peaceful situation prevailing in the country allowed rapid development to take place, a feat difficult to be matched by other multi-racial countries, which experience riots and disturbances.

"That's why I say we can be proud of ourselves. But we have to be grateful and thank those who have worked hard to develop the country."

Later, Dr Mahathir received a Jalur Gemilang measuring 3x6.95 metres borne by a parachutist from a 15-member team, which touched down at the centre of the field.

The feat secured a place in the Malaysia Book of Records as the biggest national flag ever carried by parachutists.

After handing over the flag to two members of the Kumpulan Ekspedisi Bermotor Jalur Gemilang for a journey through the city, the Prime Minister then flagged off some 1,200 bikers from the group.

The Merdeka month activities is divided into five main categories - the launching of the Merdeka Month celebrations and flag-raising campaign, religious activities from Aug 25 to 31, Merdeka Eve celebrations on Aug 30, Merdeka Day parade on Aug 31 and closing of the Merdeka Month celebrations on Sept 16.

(END)

