

# Dr M thanks predecessors

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## 'They gave me the foundation to develop country'

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KUCHING: Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday paid tribute to his four predecessors for laying a strong foundation for him to transform Malaysia from an undeveloped nation to the developing country it is today.

"I have to thank all the leaders before me," he said, naming Umno founding father Datuk Onn Jaafar and the country's three previous Prime Ministers Tunku Abdul Rahman, Tun Abdul Razak Hussein and Tun Hussein Onn.

Dr Mahathir spoke at length on the Tunku, the country's first Prime Minister and head of the first coalition government under the Alliance, which later paved the way for the formation of the present Barisan Nasional.

He said the Tunku was a charismatic personality who gained the respect of all Malaysians.

Dr Mahathir said under the Tunku's leadership all parties, including those from Sabah and Sarawak, were united.

"This was a great achievement," he told some 1,200 delegates at the Parti Pesaka Bumiputra general assembly here yesterday.

He said the Tunku planted a political concept of sharing power and wealth of this country among the multi-racial people.

Dr Mahathir said he was grateful to Tun Razak and Tun Hussein for laying the foundation to eradicate poverty and to forge rural development poli-

cies.

"I am very grateful to my predecessors because they have given the foundation for me to carry on the task of developing the country," the Prime Minister said, when opening the PBB general

assembly.

He thanked the people for giving him little trouble during his 22 years at the helm of the country.

He also reassured his support for his successor Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

"I think it is time to give a chance to others," he said and urged Sarawakians to give their full support to Abdullah and the Barisan.

Dr Mahathir also thanked PBB for its undivided support to the Barisan, adding that he

had instructed all his ministers to be hands-on in their job to ensure that policies decided by the Cabinet were understood by the civil servants and also to oversee implementation of whatever decisions made by the Cabinet.