

22 APR 2002

Zahir-Mahathir

DR MAHATHIR, DESCRIBED AS A LEADER AHEAD OF HIS TIME

MELAKA, April 22 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is a leader with ideas ahead of his time that many have difficulty following him, said Dewan Rakyat Speaker Tun Mohamed Zahir Ismail.

He cited as an example the idea of setting up a Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC).

The MSC even gained the backing of Microsoft Corporation chairman and chief executive Bill Gates who gave his commitment to invest in the project, he said when opening a colloquium on the Thoughts and Ideas of Dr Mahathir Mohamad here today.

He said Dr Mahathir had contributed ideas to the development of the country even before becoming a member of the government through his writings in major newspapers such as The Straits Times and Utusan Melayu between 1946 and 1950.

"His book the 'The Malay Dilemma' is debated to this day," he said.

Mohamed Zahir said that as envisioned in his poem "Melayu Mudah Lupa", Dr Mahathir looked forward to a bright future for the Malays, as progressive and advanced as other races.

He said that due to Dr Mahathir's untiring efforts, Malaysia was seen as a special country so much so two world leaders president George W Bush and Britain Prime Minister Tony Blair sought Dr Mahathir's views on the crisis in Afghanistan.

He was also appointed by the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) to be their spokesman to present their views to Bush on the problem of international terrorism.

"Not many heads of state have been accorded such honour by Bush and Blair. Although many still belittle his contributions, some even refusing to acknowledge his achievements, it never weakens Dr Mahathir's spirit," he said.

Mohamed Zahir said Malaysia gained world's recognition due to Dr Mahathir's wise leadership.

He said Dr Mahathir's ideas covered various fields from economy to politics, science and technology, Islam, the Malays, women and family development, education and Vision 2020.

-- BERNAMA

SBS RON ABG