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Abdullah-Mahathir

DR MAHATHIR RECEIVES ACCOLADES FROM PAK LAH

KUALA LUMPUR, June 18 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi tonight was full of praise for Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, an outstanding statesman who had guided the nation and people through a remarkable transformation during his 21-year tenure as Prime Minister.

The Umno deputy president said Dr Mahathir not only succeeded in developing the country physically but had also changed the mindset of Malaysians who were now more confident of themselves and were respected in the world.

"Today, Malaysia has its own identity as well as self-respect. Its voice is heard and respected. Today's Malaysia is not a recipient nation," he said when opening the Umno Youth and Wanita general assembly and Puteri Umno Convention simultaneously at the Putra World Trade Centre, here.

The Deputy Prime Minister said as a result of Dr Mahathir's leadership for the past 21 years, on the international platform, Malaysia was now a model of political stability, economic development and racial and religious tolerance.

However, he was aware that 11 million Malaysians or 45 per cent of the population born during Dr Mahathir's leadership did not have any experience in evaluating the progress of the people and development of the country.

He said these citizens were born not only in the post-Merdeka era but they had known no other Prime Minister except Dr Mahathir.

The colonial rule was alien to them and the pre-New Economic Policy era was beyond their comprehension, he said.

Abdullah said as most of them would be reaching voting age and determine who should rule this country in the next general election, they would determine the shape and face of the future Malaysia.

Thus, they should be the ones who should be absorbed into the Umno struggle so that they would appreciate the sacrifices and efforts of leaders who preceded them.

"This generation must awaken to the fact that sacrifices were made to create the infrastructure we have today and which they, in turn, must build upon to generate further advancements," he said.

Abdullah also praised Dr Mahathir who is seen as an Islamic leader who adopts and innovates realistic policies based on moderation.

He said the immense physical development achieved during Dr Mahathir's leadership had influenced the country's social landscape in terms of lifestyles, careers, expertise, thinking and demands of the rakyat.

Abdullah said he was also amazed at the qualities inherent in Dr Mahathir whom he described as a tireless statesman who never gave up in the face of adversity and never succumbed to pressure and epitomized the qualities that Malaysians should strive for -- courageous, conscientious, meticulous, punctilious and thorough.

"That is the Dr Mahathir that I know, the Umno Doctor. A portrait of a statesman with a brilliant mind and a compassionate heart. A visionary and charismatic leader whom we are privileged to have as our own; a leader who has made us believe that 'Malaysia Boleh, Kita Boleh'.

"Let us pray that he will continue to be given the blessings, strength and health to lead our country and people to greater heights of achievement," he said.

-- BERNAMA

JM ZS RON AO

