

Dr M an inspiration to all, says Moggie

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ENERGY, Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Amar Leo Moggie describes outgoing Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad as a leader who is dedicated to his work and to the development of Malaysia.

He said: "That sense of dedication is very inspiring indeed. It is leadership by example personified. With such a leadership, one feels one should also contribute in some small ways."

Like Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu, Moggie was already in the cabinet when Mahathir took over as prime minister.

Moggie said he always feels a sense of awe when around the prime minister.

"One is conscious of the need to be meticulous and thorough, as he does not suffer fools gladly. At the same time, one is also conscious that he is logical and open to ideas.

"Indeed, he is likely to be unhappy if one were to dismiss new ideas off-hand without checking and trying them out first," said Moggie, adding that working with Mahathir has been an inspiration.

Moggie was first appointed by Tun Hussein Onn after the 1978 general election to the same post he holds today. The ministry was then known as the Energy, Telecommunications and Posts Ministry. Mahathir was then deputy prime minister and international trade and industries minister.

When Mahathir took over from Tun (then Datuk) Hussein Onn in 1981, he retained Moggie.

"He also has a wry sense of humour - a useful trait to temper the pressure of work."

Moggie also agrees that one of the premier's greatest achievements, as Mahathir himself has pointed out, was the continued racial harmony and religious tolerance during his time in office - something most Malaysians take for granted.

Mahathir is also synonymous with the modernisation of the country. "In the physical sense, this is manifested all

around us and throughout the country, as could be seen in the highways, industries, ports, airports, the automobile industry and now our high-tech industry and so on. All these are there for all to see."

He has also succeeded in giving all Malaysians self-confidence.

"We now know that we are, and equally important, we feel, as good as anyone else.

"Datuk Azhar Mansor was inspired to sail around the world on his own. Datuk Abdul Malik Mydin swam the English Channel and our mountaineers successfully climbed Mount Everest. Our spirit has been liberated," he says.

On Sarawak, Moggie who founded Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak in 1983 and had recently stepped down as its head, said Mahathir has been sensitive to the state. Sarawak has been given fair allocation of the development budget.

Sometimes, said the Dayak leader, people may not appreciate the background inherent in the understanding agreed by the leaders of Sarawak or Sabah vis-a-vis the peninsula when Malaysia was formed in 1963.

"I believe Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir recognises that the minority bumiputras in the two states still need specific attention to allow them to catch up with the other communities in the country. Thus, the 8th Malaysia Plan mentions their needs for specific attention."

Moggie concluded that Mahathir would be a difficult act to follow.

"He is one of a kind."