

# Ong: Thank you Dr Mahathir for everything

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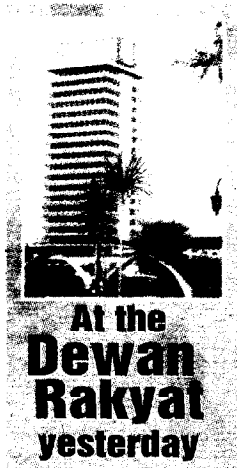
TUN Dr Mahathir Mohamad was an "extraordinary" leader who changed the face of Malaysia from a poor agro-based economy to a competitive and modern industrialised country, MCA president Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting said.

"He has built the self-confidence in the hearts of Malaysians and has succeeded in instilling in us the pride to be Malaysians," he said in his speech to support the motion of thanks to Dr Mahathir yesterday.

Ong, who is Housing and Local Government Minister, said the sadness felt over Dr Mahathir's resignation could not be expressed enough through words, advertisements or functions held in honour of the former Prime Minister.

"The people will always miss him since he had led us for the past successful 22 years," he said.

Dr Mahathir, he said, had turned Malaysia into a respect-



ed, strong nation and well known in the eyes of the world.

"Under the leadership of the former Prime Minister, Barisan Nasional became the strongest and longest political coalition in the world.

"He also succeeded in leading Barisan in achieving excellent success in the general elections for five terms in a row

since 1982 - a record very hard to break," he said with thumps of support from backbenchers.

He said the Chinese community regarded Dr Mahathir's leadership highly as he had always been caring and sensitive towards the problems faced by the community and was willing to assist in solving the problems amicably.

"On behalf of the Chinese community, I would like to record our heartfelt gratitude and thanks to Dr Mahathir for all the assistance and co-operation rendered to the community," he said.

He added that on behalf of MCA, he thanked Dr Mahathir for his support in the setting up of Tunku Abdul Rahman College and Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman.

He said the party fully supported Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and expressed confidence that the nation would continue to blossom under his leadership.