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Mahathir-Malaysia

DR MAHATHIR COMMENDS MALAYS AND OTHERS FOR DEVELOPING THE NATION

KUALA LUMPUR, June 19 (Bernama) --The Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is retiring in October, today commended the Malays and other citizens for helping to bring development and progress to the race and country over the last 46 years since independence.

He was happy to see Malaysia developing by leaps and bounds from a backward British colony to a nation wellknown throughout the world due to its role in international affairs and its views were well respected.

Inviting the people to ponder on the successes that had been achieved over the period, Dr Mahathir said the rate of development of the infrastructure in Malaysia had been rapid.

The country had produced professionals and intellectuals, its people had conquered Mt Everest and had a world-renowned giant oil corporation, Petronas.

The achievements had been many under the Umno-led Barisan Nasional government, he said.

All these achievements demonstrate the ability of Malays and Bumiputeras and other citizens to improve their status in keeping with current developments.

Malay administrators succeeded in developing Malaysia so well that they had been invited to advise other countries on various aspects of administration and development, he said.

Opening the 54th Umno General Assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre here, Dr Mahathir, who is Umno President, said the ability of Malaysia to handle the financial crisis in 1997-1998 in its own way was now acknowledged.

Dr Mahathir said the skill of Malay/Bumiputera business executives was evident from their being chosen as executive managers in giant foreign corporations.

Petronas, a fully-owned government company, was run by Malay managers and senior executives, together with non-Malays.

"From a national petroleum company which normally operates within the country, Petronas is now a multinational petroleum corporation operating in 32 countries, exploring, producing and marketing oil and gas worldwide," he said.

He said Petronas, which was listed among the 500 biggest corporations in the world, was also involved in large petro-chemical industries.

"It is clear that many Malay/Bumiputeras have the same ability in business as other communities. They can and they have demonstrated their capabilities," he said.

He said the rapid development of infrastructure in Malaysia included the North-South Expressway as well as the East-West Highway in Peninsular Malaysia.

Eventhough in Sabah and Sarawak the main roads were not yet expressways but they were far better than during the British period, he said.

The rural areas had changed with tarred roads, schools, clinics, electricity and water supply.

Towns had grown rapidly with skyscrapers in the former rubber and oil palm estates.

Kuala Lumpur is well known for its Petronas Twin Towers and development projects in the country's administrative capital of Putrajaya reflected the culture and progress achieved by Malaysia, the Prime Minister said.

The disparities in the economic wealth of the different races had been reduced and children of Bumiputera padi farmers and fishermen had become professionals, high ranking government offices, professors, generals in the armed forces and millionaires.

The Prime Minister said the spirit and confidence of the Malays could be seen when they were prepared to sail round the world alone, climb Mt Everest, swim 48KM from the mainland to Langkawi island and become badminton champions.

-- BERNAMA

JM JH ROS AAM