

29 OCT 2003

Dr Mahathir-Minutes/(with pix)

DR MAHATHIR SIGNS MINUTES OF HIS LAST CABINET MEETING

PUTRAJAYA, Oct 29 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today signed the minutes of the last Cabinet meeting he chaired before retiring on Friday after being the country's Prime Minister for 22 years.

The historic event recorded by dozens of press photographers took place at 12.30pm soon after the 883rd meeting of the Cabinet ended.

Dr Mahathir signed the minutes in the presence of Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who will succeed him, and other Cabinet ministers.

Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, met by reporters later, said Dr Mahathir had expressed his thanks to all Cabinet members for their support all these years.

"He hopes that they would give the same support to Pak Lah," he said.

He said Dr Mahathir also reminded the Cabinet members to continue to work together to develop the country.

Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein meanwhile said Dr Mahathir enjoyed chairing his last cabinet meeting.

At the meeting, he said Abdullah also spoke on behalf of the cabinet members and congratulated Dr Mahathir for all his achievements.

"He also said that the Cabinet ministers had pledged to carry on with the nation's mission and objectives set by Dr Mahathir," he said.

Second Finance Minister Datuk Dr Jamaluddin Jarjis said the country was indebted to Dr Mahathir for two reasons.

First, Dr Mahathir had succeeded in transforming the country's economy from that based on agriculture to manufacturing and industries, and second in rescuing the country from the financial crisis of 1997-98 by using his own-designed financial rescue model.

He said the world, including the International Monetary Fund (IMF), had even acknowledged Dr Mahathir's method as the best formula to bring the country out of the crisis which hit the whole of Asia.

-- BERNAMA

RIZ ABG