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Abdullah-Appreciation/Pix

MPs TOLD TO CONTINUE DR MAHATHIR'S STRUGGLES

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 3 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today called on all members of parliament (MPs) to pledge to continue the struggle to defend the nation's sovereignty, independence and prosperity through the policies, strategies and programmes introduced and promoted by Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

In recording the highest appreciation from all Malaysians for the fourth prime minister and MP for Kubang Pasu, Abdullah said he would continue the effort to enhance the excellence of the Malaysian people in the future, through means founded upon the spirit of the Federal Constitution, principles of Rukunegara and main objectives of Vision 2020.

"Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad served Malaysia and its people for 22 years, three months and 15 days as prime minister, from July 16, 1981 to the day he retired last Oct 31.

"His record of service can be traced back well before his tenure as this nation's leader. His firm and articulate voice was first heard in this house after he contested and won the Kota Setar Selatan parliamentary constituency in the general election held April 25, 1964."

Abdullah said this when tabling the motion to thank Dr Mahathir for his services to the nation and outlining the direction of his leadership in the Dewan Rakyat here today.

He said Dr Mahathir is the longest serving MP after Tun Abdul Ghaffar Baba, the MP for Batu Berendam.

Dr Mahathir, he said has become MP close to 36 years, served the cabinet for 29 years for which he was the prime minister for 22 years.

"In his early days as legislator, he has been known to voice his opinions and criticisms openly and frankly.

"He has a reputation of a man who articulates his views with discipline. He has always advocated renewal and possesses a vision that is ahead of his time," said Abdullah, who was sworn in as Malaysia's fifth Prime Minister last Friday.

Abdullah said Dr Mahathir inherited a stable country and a prosperous economy and through his efforts, he brought the country to a higher level of success and prosperity.

He said the Dewan Rakyat should accept the fact that Dr Mahathir has served with the fullest dedication, firmness, efficacy, excellence and wisdom.

Abdullah said the people appreciated and held in regard the noble, enduring and invaluable struggle, sacrifice, deeds and service of the Kubang Pasu MP, carried out through pragmatic policies, strategies and programmes to ensure national unity and resilience, security and wellbeing of the people and prosperity and brilliant success of the nation.

He said the motion was moved to appreciate Dr Mahathir's struggle to uphold the dignity of Islam and ummah throughout the world particularly in plural Malaysia through the acquisition and mastery of knowledge in all fields.

Abdullah said the motion was also to support Dr Mahathir's wisdom in tackling the nation's economic crisis caused by international rogue financial speculators, through the execution of unique, effective and internationally acclaimed economic and financial strategies and management.

Abdullah said the motion is also to recognise that Vision 2020, inspired by Dr Mahathir, a national doctrine to build a Malaysian nation

that is sovereign and independent, unified, peaceful, prosperous, advanced, excellent, dignified and respected, in an era of globalisation and neo-colonialism.

"It (motion) acknowledges that the great effort by the Kubang Pasu MP to develop information and communications technology (ICT) through the establishment of the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) and to develop biotechnology through the creation of the bio-valley will bring about tremendous benefits to the people of Malaysia in the future," he said.

He said infrastructure and human resources development grew at its fastest pace during Dr Mahathir's premiership.

"More importantly, he placed our country on the world map and has made Malaysia an example of political stability, economic prosperity, racial unity and religious tolerance, making it to be acknowledged as a progressive Islamic nation.

Abdullah said under Dr Mahathir's leadership, Malaysia has wielded a big voice in international forums.

"South-South cooperation was infused with new life. The membership was successfully expanded. The Commonwealth heads of government meeting and the summit meetings of the G-15, Non-Aligned Movement and Organisation of Islamic Conference were all held in Malaysia.

"Today, Malaysia is the 18th largest trading nation in the world. Malaysia possesses a clear vision to become a developed nation by 2020," said Abdullah.

The Prime Minister said Dr Mahathir has imbued self-confidence, dignity and national pride among Malaysians and now "he is a hero to this nation and to the people, a hero who elevated his country in the eyes of the world".

He said the Dewan Rakyat accorded the highest respect and appreciation for Dr Mahathir for his selfless service to the nation, for all his ideas and articulate opinions, sincerity and dedication.

Abdullah said the House also recorded its highest appreciation and gratitude to Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali and her family, who have sacrificed to allow Dr Mahathir to devote his energies, thoughts and time in service to his country, people, region and the Muslims as well as the developing world.

"We pray for his health and contentment in his retirement. We wish him, Tun Dr Siti Hasmah and their family much happiness.

"May his services to this nation be recognised in this world and in the hereafter. The biggest retirement gift that the people can present him is to continue towards achieving his vision and his dream to make Malaysia a peaceful, stable and prosperous nation," said Abdullah.

Abdullah said he is grateful that Dr Mahathir has left behind a legacy of success. "A legacy that has sustained political stability, strengthened national unity, promoted economic development and given meaning to our independence.

With Allah's guidance, Abdullah said he would take stock and guidance from the successes of the leaders who came before him and seek the cooperation of his cabinet colleagues and from all segment of the societies to achieve excellence, glory and distinction for Malaysia.

He said Malaysia is grateful that the country has been bestowed with good leaders where the four earlier prime ministers -- Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra, Tun Abdul Razak Hussein, Tun Hussein Onn and Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad -- have passed on to their successors a peaceful, stable and prosperous nation.

"Each of these men was successful in their time. It is therefore fitting for this House to remember and acknowledge the contributions of each prime minister who left a legacy of a country which is peaceful and

prosperous to the people," said Abdullah.

-- BERNAMA

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