

08 SEP 2003

PBS-Mahathir

PBS BESTOWS "BAPA PERPADUAN NASIONAL" TITLE TO DR MAHATHIR

KOTA KINABALU, Sept 8 (Bernama) -- Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) has bestowed the title "Bapa Perpaduan Nasional" (Father of National Unity) to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for his success in uniting the people of various races in the country.

PBS President Datuk Joseph Pairin Kitingan said the party appreciated what Dr Mahathir had done to ensure that the people of various races would continue to live in peace and harmony.

"Personally, I am very impressed with YAB Datuk Seri, both as a leader and a statesman, and what we appreciate most is his success and his ability to unite the people of various races in this country.

"As such, without reservation we bestow the title 'Bapa Perpaduan Nasional' to YAB Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad," he said at the opening of the 18th PBS Congress at the Hongkod Koisaan Hall in Penampang near here today.

Pairin said the PBS not only valued Dr Mahathir's emphasis on national integration in a plural society like Malaysia but also his determination to promote unity based on the concept of one big family.

On the question of leadership, Pairin said that even though he was Dr Mahathir's "sparring partner" for some time in the past, "I was actually a secret admirer of the Prime Minister."

He said PBS was also thankful to Dr Mahathir for administering the country very well over the past 22 years, so much so that Malaysia was now well known in the international arena.

"Malaysia is lucky to have a leader with such a vision, far-sightedness and courage.

"Without Dr Mahathir, there is no Vision 2020, no Look East Policy, no Proton Saga and no administrative centre of Putrajaya, and certainly without him we would not have succeeded in overcoming the financial crises of 1997 and 1998 which crippled the economy of several neighbouring countries," he said.

As for the PBS, Pairin said it would play its role in the Barisan Nasional (BN) to help the government especially in the implementation of the Vision 2020.

"Certainly, it is no easy task to bring progress to the whole country. It requires a balanced approach, and patience and diligence," he said.

-- BERNAMA

NT ABG