

27 AUG 2003

Mahathir-Merdeka

PEOPLE SAY THANKS TO PM FOR HIS LEADERSHIP

PUTRAJAYA, Aug 27 (Bernama) -- Malaysians, represented by various organisations, today expressed their appreciation to Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for his role in developing the country of more than 20 million and making it peaceful.

The appreciation came in the form of bouquets of flowers, greeting cards, portraits and other souvenirs which were presented to the Prime Minister and his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, at a ceremony at the Prime Minister's Department here.

The ceremony, attended by 3,500 people, was held in conjunction with the country's 46th National Day on Aug 31.

In his brief speech, Dr Mahathir said he was proud to have the opportunity to observe the historic day at the federal administrative centre here for the first time.

"I am fortunate to be able to see Putrajaya developing well and could celebrate National Day here. For me, I am thankful for being able to celebrate National Day here while I am still the Prime Minister," said Dr Mahathir, who has been leading the country since 1981.

The National Day celebrations will be held for the first time at the federal administrative capital.

Dr Mahathir also advised the people to drive carefully, especially during the National Day celebrations, to prevent accidents.

Referring to last Sunday's crash in Serendah, near Rawang, he said: "It is all right to be a bit late. We do not want to see a repeat of what happened recently when 12 people died because one driver was (said to be) in a hurry.

"We want our country to be safe from terrorists, but we are still not safe on the road," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the people had a responsibility to preserve the peace in the country so that they could continue celebrating its independence in future.

"I am thankful that the people have very good attitudes and do not like a chaotic situation. It is our responsibility to maintain this situation and cooperate to develop the country," he said.

-- BERNAMA

SHI MAM YBY