

20/12/2003

Abdullah pays tribute to Dr M's leadership

Jason Gerald

PUTRAJAYA, Fri. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi described Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad as a great statesman for the latter's contributions which enabled Malaysia to emerge as a successful nation.

Abdullah described the former Prime Minister as a visionary leader, saying that Dr Mahathir's contributions were immense and beyond words.

"I represent all Malaysians in thanking you for your contributions, guidance, ideas and opinions. Your sacrifices are priceless.

"Due to Dr Mahathir's leadership, I now inherit a strong and stable country where we are able to live in peace, harmony and racial unity besides having a strong economic development," he said.

Abdullah paid a similar tribute to Dr Mahathir's wife, Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, who had also made many sacrifices when she was the First Lady.

"This same recognition should also be given to Dr Siti Hasmah, a woman who had also sacrificed tremendously for the country."

"Since stepping down, Dr Mahathir and Dr Siti Hasmah are looking younger than me. Maybe it is the chemistry of being together that had worked wonders on both of them," he said in jest.

Abdullah said this at the Administrative and Diplomatic Service Association's (PPTD) annual dinner attended by Dr Mahathir and Dr Siti Hasmah.

Also present were Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Samsudin Osman, Public Service Department director-general Tan Sri Jamaluddin Ahmad Damanhuri and PPTD president Datuk Seri Aseh Che Mat, who is also Home Ministry secretary-general.

Abdullah also called on the civil service to continue to strive for excellence.

"The Malaysian civil service has played a leading role in the success of our nation."

He said the civil service had proven to Malaysians and to the world that the country possessed the tools to manage and progress.

"But this does not mean we should rest on our laurels. We must continue to strive to achieve excellence and distinction."

"We must continue to infuse our work ethic with integrity, efficiency and professionalism. These are values that are essential ingredients in order for Malaysia to ascend to greater heights," he said.

Abdullah said the Government had long prided itself as business-loving and would remain a nation that was conducive to private enterprise, which has been the engine of the economic growth.

"But without a public delivery service system, the wheels of the machine will grind to a halt as the private enterprise can only thrive if the public sector plays its role as a partner. This is the central tenet of the Malaysia Incorporated concept.

"As public servants, it is therefore our duty to provide the best quality service to our customers - the ordinary taxpayers, as well as corporations."

Abdullah also warned civil servants not to abuse power to accumulate personal wealth.