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Local Siamese community indebted to Dr M

KANGAR, Sun. - Former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad gave the local Siamese community official recognition when he appointed a representative of the community to the Dewan Negara.

The unprecedented move gave the community an important avenue to champion and highlight their interests and grievances, said Malaysian Siamese Association secretary-general Senator Swi Chun Eam.

"This will be always cherished by the Siamese community," Swi told the New Straits Times.

"Although a minority race, the community is deeply indebted to Dr Mahathir for having improved our socio-economic status during his tenure," she said.

Swi said they also welcomed the appointment of Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi as the country's fifth Prime Minister.

"Pak Lah has been a good co-pilot of Dr Mahathir as well as a seasoned politician and experienced diplomat.

"We are confident he will steer the country to greater heights," she said.

She also expressed hope the issue of Malaysian-born Siamese holding red identity cards would be resolved soon.