

01/11/2003

Malay dailies focus on tribute to Dr M for his leadership

Ramlan Said

LIKE the other papers, yesterday's edition of Utusan Malaysia and Berita Harian can be described as a tribute to Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who stepped down after leading the country for 22 years.

Apart from news, both dailies also published special supplements on Dr Mahathir, packed with features and anecdotes about his life and leadership.

Their editorials focused on the smooth transition from Dr Mahathir to Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who took his oath as the country's fifth Prime Minister before Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin at Istana Negara.

Both dailies thanked Dr Mahathir for his stellar leadership and welcomed Abdullah's appointment.

The tabling of the mid-term review of the Eighth Malaysia Plan in Parliament on Thursday by Dr Mahathir was also given wide coverage by Utusan, with page two devoted to the event.

It was Dr Mahathir's last appearance as Prime Minister in the Dewan Rakyat.

The paper carried a light moment in the House when the Prime Minister took questions from MPs during question time.

In another story, Berita Harian reported that 43,076 Employees' Provident Fund contributors aged 65 years and above have failed to collect their savings amounting to RM85.374 million.

EPF deputy chief executive (operations) Mohd Zabidi Dasuki said they had taken various steps to trace the contributors but to no avail.

"Some of the contributors have savings up to RM584,000 but they have failed to come forward to claim the money. It is possible that these people have died or changed addresses."

He said EPF would hold on to the monies adding that the problem would not surface if contributors had named their nominees.