

NO62: (F)
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KUALA LUMPUR, JUNE 26 (BERNAMA) — THE UMNO GENERAL ASSEMBLY TODAY ENDORSED THE ELECTION OF DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD AS THE FIFTH PRESIDENT OF THE PARTY.

THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER WAS EARLIER RETURNED UNOPOSED TO THE POST WHEN DATUK HUSSEIN ONN DECIDED NOT TO SEEK RE-ELECTION.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR, 56, WHO WAS ONCE SACKED FROM THE PARTY ON DISCIPLINARY GROUNDS, IS CERTAIN TO TAKE OVER THE REIN OF THE GOVERNMENT WHEN THE PRIME MINISTER RETIRES, PROBABLY NEXT MONTH.

HE ENTERED POLITICS AT THE AGE OF 20, AND DURING THE PAST 36 YEARS HE HAD PROVEN HIMSELF TO BE A DEDICATED, SINCERE AND ABLE LEADER.

HE IS POPULAR NOT ONLY AMONG THE UMNO CIRCLES BUT ALSO AMONG THE PEOPLE AND OVERSEAS. — BERNAMA MORE 1918/LK

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THE PRIME MINISTER, DATUK HUSSEIN ONN, WHEN NAMING THE DOCTOR FROM KEDAH AS HIS DEPUTY IN 1976, SAID: +I HAVE MADE MY CHOICE AND I PRAY AND HOPE THAT I'VE MADE THE RIGHT CHOICE AND THE PEOPLE WILL ACCEPT AND SUPPORT HIM.+

COMMENTING ON HIS APPOINTMENT THEN, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID: +I WILL TRY MY BEST TO SHOULDER THE HEAVY RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PEOPLE AND THE NATION.+

DATUK HUSSEIN'S PRAYER WAS ANSWERED — HIS CHOICE WAS PROVEN TO BE THE RIGHT ONE. HE WILL NOW HAND OVER THE REINS OF THE GOVERNMENT AND UMNO TO AN ABLE MAN WITH WHOM HE HAD BEEN CLOSELY ASSOCIATED FOR THE LAST FIVE YEARS.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR HAS FULFILLED HIS PLEDGE — HE IS NOW KNOWN AS A PRAGMATIC, STRAIGHTFORWARD, FIRM BUT JUST LEADER.

IN THE INTERNATIONAL FIELD, HE HAD SUCCEEDED IN REVIVING THE CONFIDENCE OF THE FOREIGN INVESTORS IN THE INVESTMENT CLIMATE IN THE COUNTRY.

WHILE LEADING MALAYSIAN TRADE MISSIONS OVERSEAS, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR, IN HIS OWN WAY HAD SUCCEEDED IN DEFENDING THE CONTROVERSIAL INDUSTRIAL COORDINATION ACT. — BERNAMA MORE 1823/LK

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TODAY, MALAYSIA IS FLOODED WITH APPLICATIONS FROM FOREIGN INVESTORS TO SET UP INDUSTRIES.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR IS POPULARLY KNOWN AS "DOKTOR UMNO" IN HIS HOMETOWN, ALOR STAR.

HE RECEIVED HIS EARLY EDUCATION AT THE SEBERANG PERAK MALAY SCHOOL AND LATER WENT TO THE SULTAN ABDUL HAMID COLLEGE IN ALOR STAR.

ON COMPLETION OF HIS SECONDARY EDUCATION, HE WENT TO THE UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA IN SINGAPORE WHERE HE OBTAINED HIS MBBS DEGREE.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SERVED AS A MEDICAL OFFICER IN KEDAH AND PERLIS BEFORE RESIGNING FROM THE GOVERNMENT IN 1957 TO SET UP PRIVATE PRACTICE.

HIS EXPERIENCES DURING THE JAPANESE AND BRITISH RULE MADE HIM REALISE THE IMPORTANCE OF POLITICAL STRUGGLE.

HIS POLITICAL ACTIVITIES STARTED IN 1945 WHEN HE JOINED A NUMBER OF ORGANISATIONS, INCLUDING SEBERKAS, KESATUAN KEDAH, KESATUAN PEMUDA MELAYU KEDAH, BEFORE ENTERING UMNO. --- BERNAMA MORE

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HIS LEADERSHIP WAS TESTED WHEN HE WAS EXPELLED FROM UMNO IN 1960. HE WAS RE-ADMITTED INTO THE PARTY LATER BY THE LATE TUN RAZAK AND HAS NEVER LOOK BACK SINCE.

WITH SHEER DEDICATION AND SINCERITY, THIS SON OF AN ENGLISH SCHOOL TEACHER MANAGED TO REGAIN THE CONFIDENCE OF THE PARTY.

NO ONE CAN DENY THAT HIS LEADERSHIP WAS ACCEPTED BY THE PEOPLE AND, BECAUSE OF THIS, HIS RETURN TO UMNO WAS A HISTORIC OCCASION.

THE FUTURE PRIME MINISTER WANTS A RE-STRUCTURED MALAYSIAN SOCIETY IN WHICH THE BUMIPUTRAS HAVE A MORE MEANINGFUL PLACE IN THEIR OWN LAND.

HE IS DETERMINED TO ERADICATE POVERTY, PARTICULARLY AMONG THE RURAL PEOPLE, AND CREATE UNITY THROUGH THE USE OF A SINGLE LANGUAGE, BAHASA MALAYSIA.

THESE VIEWS OF HIS ARE NOW ACCEPTED BY SOCIETY. IN FACT, HIS IDEA OF ESTABLISHING A PADI PLANTATION TO MAKE THE SMALLHOLDER INDUSTRY MORE PROFITABLE IS NOW REALITY. --- BERNAMA 1969/LK