

28 OCT 2003

Nation-Tribute

NATION PAYS TRIBUTE TO DR MAHATHIR AND PAK LAH

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 28 (Bernama) -- From the north to the south, Malaysians from all walks of life are planning various ways to pay tribute

to outgoing Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his successor, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

In KANGAR, a banner, measuring 2.5km with some 65,000 signatures of students and teachers across Perlis, will be handed to Dr Mahathir on Thursday, before he hands over the Premiership to Abdullah.

When putting down his signature today, Perlis Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim said he would personally hand the banner to the Prime Minister in his capacity as Menteri Besar and Perlis Education Portfolio chairman.

The signatures were a symbol of gratitude towards the leadership, service, sacrifices and struggles of Dr Mahathir, he said, adding that other gifts by the Perlis people would be given after the Premier's retirement.

In PENANG, the succession of the State's favourite son to the Premiership on Saturday will be celebrated in a riot of colours.

State Umno Liaison Deputy Chairman Datuk Dr Hilmi Yahaya said 10,000 people would await Abdullah's arrival at the Bayan Lepas International Airport at 3.45pm when he is expected to give his first address as Prime Minister.

Abdullah would also be accompanied on a public procession from the airport to the Penang Bridge and escorted by 1,000 high-powered motorcycles to his mother's house in Kepala Batas for a breaking of fast ceremony with his family.

In BUKIT MERTAJAM, teachers and students of Sekolah Kebangsaan Mengkuang signed a six metres by three metres banner, with the words "Thank you to Dr M for successfully raising the dignity of the race and country"

in conjunction with a programme to commemorate the Prime Minister.

Headmaster Hashim Abdullah said the programme also included

competitions to create Dr Mahathir's scrapbook, biography and post cards, elocution and essay contests and a poetry reading competition.

"We will also gather all the students to listen to the Prime Minister's final speech this Thursday (in Parliament) on televisions in the viewing room and school canteen," he said.

In MELAKA, the 4B Youth is also collecting signatures to mark the Melaka people's gratitude towards Dr Mahathir's 22 years of service as Prime Minister.

Its deputy chairman, Hassan Abd Rahman, said the 100m banner had been placed at the Melaka International Trade Centre in Air Keroh to allow the public to put down their signatures.

"To date, some 6,000 signatures have been collected and many more people can still sign before Thursday, as the banner will be handed to Dr Mahathir during a gathering at the Putra World Trade Centre on that day," he said.

The banner will be handed over by Melaka Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam as Malaysian 4B Youth President.

In KUALA TERENGGANU, the Confederation of Malay Students in the Peninsula, which has 450,000 members nationwide, today expressed its gratitude to Dr Mahathir as in his 22 years at Malaysia's helm, he had implemented various changes to raise the dignity of Malaysians, especially in education.

Its Secretary-General, Syed Anuar Syed Mohamad, said the implementation of the meritocracy policy and the use of English in Science and Mathematics had proved successful despite early criticism.

Saying that the policies would continue to be a success even after Dr Mahathir retired, he said the outgoing Premier's final wish to see unity promoted by strengthening national schools and vision schools would be championed by Abdullah.

"We are confident and believe that unity should be instilled in children and the vision school is the best formula for this," he said.

Syed Anuar said the Confederation would also remember all the advice

which it had been given by Dr Mahathir, who was its patron.

-- BERNAMA

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