

King praises leadership, asks all to stay united

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KUALA LUMPUR: Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin has described Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and his predecessor Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad as exemplary leaders with excellent personality and capabilities.

He said they had proven their commendable qualities through sterling leadership.

"They are intelligent, have vision, and are dedicated and committed to transforming Malaysia in our own mould into a developed and respected nation," he said at the farewell banquet hosted in his honour at a leading hotel here last night.

"I feel honoured and fortunate to have had the opportunity to serve as the King during their administration.

"The valuable experience gained during Dr Mahathir's era and now in Abdullah's administration made me realise how fortunate and blessed this country and its people are."

The king's reign as the 12th Yang di-Pertuan Agong ends on Tuesday. Present at the banquet

was Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Fauziah Tengku Abdul Rashid.

Abdullah, his deputy, Datuk Seri Najib Razak, Dr Mahathir and his wife Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Cabinet members, menteri besar, chief ministers, high commissioners, ambassadors and senior government officials were also present.

The King said he was happy to be provided with economic and development reports every year which showed good progress, besides receiving weekly briefings and discussions on government administration matters with the prime minister before he chaired the weekly Cabinet meeting.

"I am also happy to be updated on the government's planning on development programmes for the nation, like the Ninth Malaysia Plan, which is one of the three national development plans for the next 15 years."

The king said the government's strong emphasis on human capital development was to turn Malaysians into capable and competitive manpower not only rich in

knowledge and competent in skills but also possessing high personal ethics and moral values, and physically healthy and fit.

"There is no country in the world which can taste development and attain success by merely relying on government initiatives and administration without the people's support and having them play their roles effectively.

"Therefore, be a human being with noble values as exhorted by Islam, and realise and honour your duty to the nation as a responsible citizen."

On the institution of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, the king said the dignity and honour of the institution must be constantly enhanced as the Yang di-Pertuan Agong was not only the pillar and symbol of sovereignty of Malaysia's constitutional monarchy but also the head of state and symbol of the people's loyalty to the law and Constitution.

He said the king was more than a ceremonial figurehead, but had the role to serve and contribute to the nation by initiating efforts and

giving ideas directly or indirectly.

"This is to forge and nurture unity among the people, support government programmes on the nation's prosperity, people's well-being and to promote Islamic tenets in the country."

The king also urged leaders and the people to continue to forge and preserve the prevailing unity and goodwill in the country.

The prime minister said the institution of constitutional monarchy would continue to be upheld regardless of whatever changes that may take place in the country.

He said this was because the institution had existed for so long and had been proven to be successful in protecting the interests of all the people in the country.

"The institution of Constitutional Monarchy headed by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong represented the people's solidarity and peace in the country.

"As such, the government and the rakyat express their gratitude and appreciation for the duration of Your Majesty's reign as the Yang di-Pertuan Agong," Abdullah said. — Bernama