

# School pays moving tribute to Dr M

S 01/11/2003 - 15 PRECISE

By THOMAS HUONG

RETIRED Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was paid a touching tribute in a special assembly attended by about 1,000 students from SMK Seafield in USJ 2, Subang Jaya, as well as teachers and representatives from the school's Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) on Thursday.

The event at the school hall was one of many simultaneous assemblies held nationwide at 9am by schools and public universities to commemorate Dr Mahathir's

retirement and pay tribute to him for his contributions to the country's education development.

The simultaneous assemblies, attended by some six million people in the education sector, were also to welcome the appointment of Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi as the fifth Prime Minister of Malaysia.

Special messages from Education Minister Tan Sri Musa Mohamad and education director-general Datuk Abdul Rafie Mahat were delivered.

The messages highlighted that Dr Mahathir was instrumental in



Zaleha (left) and Lee holding the card of appreciation to Dr Mahathir.

introducing the school curricula of KBSR and KBSM when he was the Education Minister in the 1970s, changing the medium of instruction for Mathematics and Science in school to English and abolishing the quota system for public university enrolment in favour of meritocracy.

A special open letter to Dr Mahathir from students was also read out. The letter said that he had set an exemplary role for students.

Among those present were SMK Seafield PTA president Rosalind Lee Suy Ting and deputy president Helmy Jaafar as well as school principal Zaleha Abu Hazan.

Poems of gratitude were read out and the patriotic song *Pahlawanku* (My Warrior) was poignantly sung by teachers and students, moving a few of those present to shed tears.

A large card of appreciation to Dr Mahathir filled with signatures from students and teachers was also presented before the ceremony concluded, with everyone singing *Auld Lang Syne* accompanied by a rousing performance from the school's brass band.



SMK Seafield brass band giving a rousing performance at the special assembly.



PTA committee member Norijah Mohd Ali wiping away tears as she listens to the poignant presentation at SMK Seafield.