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Dr Mahathir bestowed foundation's highest award

ARAU, Sat. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today received the Anugerah Cemerlang DiRaja, the highest award by the Yayasan Tuanku Syed Putra, from the Raja of Perlis, Tuanku Syed Putra Jamalullail.

Dr Mahathir, the first recipient of the award bestowed once in five years, received the honour at Istana Arau's Balai Rong Seri.

The award was bestowed to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the ascension of Tuanku Syed Putra to the Perlis throne on Dec 5 last year.

The foundation, chaired by Perlis Raja Muda Syed Sirajuddin, chose the Prime Minister for his contribution and services to the people and nation.

The honour carries a RM100,000 cash award from the foundation. Dr Mahathir also received another RM100,000 and a persalinan (a suit of traditional costume) from the Perlis Government.

Among the criteria for the award is that the person must serve the country with distinction for at least 25 years.

He or she must also possess excellent leadership qualities and have gained national and international recognition.

Also present were the Raja Perempuan, Raja Muda and Raja Puan Muda, the Prime Minister's wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim and wife Datin Seri Shamsiah Mohd Yassin and State dignitaries.

In his post-award speech, Dr Mahathir said it never crossed his mind that his contribution to the people and country would receive recognition from any quarters.

"It is the responsibility of leaders to provide their services to the people and country.

"The co-operation by the Government, leaders and the people was responsible for our country achieving what it has achieved today," he added.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was lucky that political stability and the ability of its multi-racial population to live in harmony had enabled the Government to plan socio-economic programmes for the benefit of the people.

He said unlike other countries which concentrated their development programmes only in selected areas, people at all levels living in all States in the country were able to enjoy the fruits of development.

"Our development strategy enables all States to enjoy the fruits of development," he said.

The Raja Muda in his speech said the foundation, which assists the needy in education and socio-economic development, had made the right choice in selecting Dr Mahathir to receive its highest award.

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