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Mahathir-Award

PRIME MINISTER RECEIVES MASTER BUILDERS AWARD

KUALA LUMPUR, March 17 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was today awarded the International Federation of Asian and Western Pacific Contractors Association's Atsumi Award, one of the most prestigious awards of builders and contractors.

The award was instituted in 1993 at the IFAWPCA's 26th convention in Tokyo by the late Takeo Atsumi, a world renowned master builder who had contributed immensely towards the global development of the construction industry.

Dr Mahathir received the award from Atsumi's wife, Itsuko, at a friendship dinner hosted by the IFAWPCA in conjunction with its 29th convention here.

The award, which carries a cash price of US\$3,000, is presented at every IFAWPCA convention.

The IFAWPCA secretariat, based in Manila, has chosen Dr Mahathir as the recipient of the award in recognition of his tremendous contribution towards the promotion of growth and development of the construction industry in Malaysia.

The award was specially created by Atsumi to accord recognition to any outstanding person or group of persons, for rendering meritorious services in the promotion of the construction industry in the host nation of the IFAWPCA convention.

In his speech, Dr Mahathir thanked the association for the award.

"I've never been a contractor or a builder...I've only confined to asking people to build projects.

"All these big projects are not my own but rather a dream of this country to have something worthy to share," he said.

He said the big projects which were sometimes defined as mega projects were actually "small" projects.

Dr Mahathir said that the US\$4 billion Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) project, being implemented on a 10,000-ha piece of land in Sepang, was the biggest airport project anywhere but a new airport (outside Malaysia) could soon be built at a cost of US\$20 billion, and five times bigger than KLIA.

In jest, the prime minister said that Malaysians were "small people, trying to do things to cheer themselves up."

"We are trying to cheer ourselves up at this point of time when the construction sector is facing problems...but we were told we shouldn't do things which are bad for us," he said.

He however hoped that by postponing some of the projects, the people would have more confidence in the country. -- BERNAMA

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