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`Dr M a leader of great vision'

ad; Rosihah Zain

DATUK Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was yesterday described as a leader of "great vision and courage" for his contributions to the progress of Islam and his efforts to make Malaysia the pride of the Islamic world.

He was also acclaimed as a renowned statesman by representatives of the African, Arabic and Asian groups of the Organisation of Islamic Conference.

Malaysia's achievements under his leadership had set an example for other Muslim nations to follow, they said.

They said this in their reply to the Prime Minister's keynote address during the opening ceremony of the 27th session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers yesterday.

Pakistani Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar said Malaysia's rise as a modern, dynamic and progressive Islamic nation had set a high standard in the Muslim world.

Representing the Asian group, he said Malaysia's success was distinguished by the courage and conviction of the country's leadership.

Malaysia's success, he said, reflected the glory of an Islamic civilisation and commitment towards propagating the religion.

He praised Malaysia for devising an innovative strategy to confront the challenges posed to its economy.

"We share the pride of the people of Malaysia for their achievements and for setting an example to other Muslim nations.

"It has reminded us that we are also capable of developing appropriate policies to help ourselves," he added.

Senegal's Foreign Minister, Cheikh Tidiane Gadio, who represented the African group, praised Malaysia for making sustained efforts and harnessing all economic factors for progress and poverty eradication.

Under Dr Mahathir's leadership, he said, Malaysia had contributed a lot to the activities of the ICFM-OIC. Gadio said he was convinced of Malaysia's commitment to the OIC cause.

The Malaysian leadership was an honour for the OIC, he said, adding that the keynote address by Dr Mahathir showed a leader's great vision and courage.

Oman's Foreign Minister, Yousuf Alawi Abdullah, representing the Arab Group, said Dr Mahathir's views on the development and progress of the Muslim community would serve as a framework for answers to issues involving the Muslim world.

"There are many issues to be discussed and work on during this meeting. We have to look at this trend-setting speech."

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