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Meiji University honours Mahathir

Lokman Mansor in Tokyo

TOKYO, Thurs: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was conferred yesterday an honorary doctorate by Meiji University, one of the most prestigious tertiary institutions in Tokyo.

The award was conferred by Meiji University president Professor Yuichi Yamada.

Dr Mahathir is the 18th recipient of the honorary doctorate from the university since 1971, and the fourth Prime Minister to receive such an award.

The previous leaders that have been conferred were Takeo Miki and Tomiichi Muruyama of Japan and Canada's Jean Chretien.

The honorary doctorate was conferred on Dr Mahathir in recognition of his "dedication and commitment to the promotion of human resource development" in Malaysia through "educational and technological exchange with global perspective".

The conferment acknowledges the Prime Minister's role in launching the Look-East Policy in the early 1980s, that emphasises the significance of the work ethics and values of the Japanese which Malaysians ought to emulate to attain industrialised nation status by 2020.

The university has 34,000 students and more than 700 faculty staff. Since 1984, 372 Malaysians have been admitted into the university to pursue undergraduate and graduate programmes of various disciplines.

Currently there are 14 Malaysian students pursuing undergraduate programmes in science and engineering fields, two at post-graduate level and one doctorate.

In his acceptance speech, Dr Mahathir said it is an honour and privilege for him to be in the illustrious company of the previous recipients.

Dr Mahathir is on a four-day working visit to Japan. Earlier yesterday he delivered the inaugural speech at the United Nations University's U Thant Distinguished Lecture Series.

He will visit NTT Musashino R&D Centre tomorrow, followed by a keynote address at the 7th Nikkei International Conference. Later Dr Mahathir will call on Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi.

He will also have a dialogue with Malaysian students on Saturday night.

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