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Mahathir-Post

I LEARN TO BE A PRIME MINISTER, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, May 29 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said that although he has been Prime Minister for 22 years, he has never stopped learning so that he could lead the country effectively.

"I learnt to be a Prime Minister," he said during a question and answer session after delivering his speech at the Workers Day 2003 gathering of public sector employees at the National Institute of Public Administration (Intan) in Bukit Kiara here today.

He was asked on what advice he would give to junior government officers to help achieve the Vision 2020 to turn Malaysia into a developed nation.

Dr Mahathir said he continued to learn even to this day on the kind of measures to take and to avoid, as well as striving to acquire various types of knowledge.

If a country changed its prime minister too often, it would be difficult for it to achieve progress because each prime minister would take time to learn the most effective way of administering and leading the country.

Soon after he was appointed as the country's fourth Prime Minister in 1981, he said he set aside his personal interest and focus on national interest.

"Do away with matters of no relevance to duties," he said.

Dr Mahathir said important qualities which every officer should possess would be discipline, including overcoming personal desire for the good of all, as well as loyalty and willingness to improve one's capability at all time.

He said government employees must always abide by the directive given to ensure duties would be discharged to be best of their abilities.

In issuing a directive, it must be ensure that the it could be done, he said.

"I don't ask people to do what I am not willing to do myself," he said.

Since becoming Prime Minister, Dr Mahathir has introduced various measures to enhance the performance and image of the public service, such as the clock-in system, name tag and Look East Policy to emulate positive work ethics of the Japanese and Koreans.

He also introduced the clean, efficient and trustworthy campaign for government employees and launched policies on the assimilation of Islamic values in the government's administration, Malaysia Incorporated and privatisation.

During the function, Dr Mahathir was presented with a book entitled "Mahathir Arkitek Kecemerlangan Perkhidmatan Awam" (Mahathir, Architect of Public Service Excellence), produced by the Public Service Department in appreciation of the services and contribution of Dr Mahathir.

The Prime Minister also handed over ex-gratia payments to wives of two government officers who died while on official duties. They were Noradzma Yusof, wife of Jamdin Ramli, and Hafizah Ismail, wife of Mustafa Mohd Amin.

Jamdin, a Youth and Sports officer, was killed in a road accident in Brunei in 2001 while being part of the Malaysian contingent for the Asian Youth Ship while Mustafa, a machine and factory examiner, died in November last year.

-- BERNAMA

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