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Indon-Mahathir

INDONESIANS SAY THEY WILL MISS DR MAHATHIR'S LEADERSHIP

By: Openg Onn

JAKARTA, Oct 30 (Bernama) -- Many Indonesians including the man in the street and in the remote areas of this vast nation are full of praise for Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and say they will miss his leadership.

They see Dr Mahathir not just as the Malaysian Prime Minister but as an Islamic leader close to their hearts.

"His voice is very much our voice. We are proud of him. Malaysia is lucky to have had such a leader," said Mines and Energy Minister, Purnomo Yusgiantoro. Purnomo, was the last Indonesian minister who had the opportunity to be with Dr Mahathir before his retirement today.

He was assigned by President Megawati Sukarnoputri as Minister-in-Attendance when Dr Mahathir visited central Java, last week to receive the Honorary Engineering Award from the ASEAN Federation of Engineering Organisations (AFEO).

To the hundreds of workers of Bawean Island in the Java Sea off the northern coast of the island of Java, who had worked in Malaysia, their attachment to Dr Mahathir is so deep that they had named a road in their village after him.

"The Jakarta Post" Indonesia's sole English daily in an editorial titled "Mahathir Mohamad's Legacy" also paid tribute to Dr Mahathir and for the orderly transfer of power to his successor.

It said that an orderly leadership succession was one of the most important achievements that a developing non-Western country could attain.

"Mahathir has shown that it is politically feasible for a non-Western country to manage an orderly succession, without resorting to street demonstrations or military coups."

"Mahathir will always be remembered for his far-reaching programmes to enhance the quality of life of Malaysia's people and improve its scientific and technological base," the Jakarta Post said.

The newspaper suggested that Dr Mahathir devote his new phase in his life to setting up a Mahathir Mohamad Centre in some part of beautiful Malaysia and bank on his prestige as a successful world leader and statesman.

The "Media Indonesia" under its editorial "A Footstep that Needs Our Emulation" said that Dr Mahathir was a leader who knew when to step down.

He is stepping down at the height of his popularity after having developed Malaysia into a prosperous and modern nation, the paper said.

As Prime Minister, Dr Mahathir was the spokesman for the developing and Islamic world in facing Western hegemony, Media Indonesia said.

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