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Rais-Mahathir

MAHATHIR, THE BUILDER OF MODERN MALAYSIA, SAYS RAIS

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 23 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is the builder of modern Malaysia, who "has done the marathon act of governing the country as punctuated by a plethora of development", Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim said today.

He said that Dr Mahathir is also more than qualified to be aptly referred to as a statesman from Asia.

Not only has he lectured all over the world, he also has supporters in the Third World, while the South-South endeavour has earned him both respect and appreciation, he said when launching "The Encyclopedia on Dr Mahathir bin Mohamad" for the international level at the Islamic Centre of Oxford University in England. The text of his speech was also released here.

The local launch of the 10-volume encyclopedia was performed by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi on Sunday.

Rais said that having led Malaysia successfully for more than two decades, the country has benefited immensely under Dr Mahathir's leadership.

Rais said that the Prime Minister has been coaxing Malaysians to new heights and new challenges, and truly believes in the adage "what others can do we can do better".

In his zeal to create excellence, he said, Dr Mahathir epitomizes many things through leadership by example.

"Dr Mahathir is not one that is likely to be summed up as a stereotype. Dr Mahathir is many things to many people.

"Reticent yet expansive. Reserved yet warm and spontaneous," he said.

Rais said that as a doctor, Dr Mahathir never stops producing productive ideas and whenever there is a problem, he practises the physician's style and approach. "The pill may be bitter or the injection painful but ultimately his medication cures," he said.

Rais said that as once a long-time detractor of the Prime Minister, Dr Mahathir's move to reappoint him in his government proved that "he is not a vindictive leader".

Indeed, he said, Dr Mahathir has opined publicly "in politics nothing is permanent, only the issues and the struggle are".

Touching on the encyclopedia which represents a large segment of the Prime Minister's thinking, among others, on Islam, development and education, Rais said that there still remains other aspects of the Prime Minister's ideas and thoughts that are very much associated with his leadership and the country, strewn elsewhere in books, magazines and newspapers.

He said that there is a need for Dr Mahathir's works, thoughts and contributions to be housed in a special library so that it would be a focal point of learning and research.

"In the West, presidential papers are meticulously compiled and deposited into specific purpose libraries even though a president has only done a stint of four to eight years of public service," he said.

He said that with the worldwide launching of the encyclopedia in English and Arabic, in a matter of time, the thoughts and contributions of Dr Mahathir would be known more widely in the English and Arabic-speaking world.

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