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Mahathir-Doctorate

DR MAHATHIR RECEIVES HONORARY DOCTORATE FROM INDON VARSITY

By: Openg Onn

BANDUNG, Feb 6 (Bernama) -- Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir

Mohamad received an honorary doctorate in development economy from Universiti Padjadjaran (UNPAD), a public university, here, today.

He received the doctorate from UNPAD Rector Prof Dr A.H. Himendra in a

special ceremony at the university's Convocation Hall.

Nearly 1,000 guests, including Dr Mahathir's wife, Tun Dr Siti Hasmah

Mohamad Ali, Indonesian Education Minister Malik Fajar and Malaysian students of the university, were present.

The doctorate was conferred on Dr Mahathir for his outstanding service and vision in bringing Malaysia to a new level of development, especially in the industrial world, and for industriously implementing policies to narrow the poverty gap between Malaysians from the various communities.

He is the third world leader to be conferred the honour by the university, which was set up in November 1957. The others were the former Yugoslav president, the late Josip Broz Tito, and former Vietnamese leader the late Ho Chi Minh.

In his acceptance speech, Dr Mahathir said he was honoured because this was the first time that a foreign university had mentioned Malaysia's economic development as a basis for the prestigious award.

Although he was proud to be credited with Malaysia's economic development, "I must sincerely share this credit with the three prime ministers before me", he said.

He said the late Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra, the late Tun Abdul Razak Hussein and the late Tun Hussein Onn had laid the foundation for Malaysia to leapfrog in the last 20 years.

He gave the history and his recipe for Malaysia's success in becoming one of the most developed nations in the region.

The former prime minister stressed the importance of the political stability started by Tunku Abdul Rahman to ensure smooth economic development.

He said the cooperation between the government and the corporate sector under the "Malaysia Incorporated" concept borrowed from Japan was another secret of Malaysia's success.

In Malaysia, corporate tax was 28 per cent -- down from 45 per cent previously -- and indirectly the government regarded itself as holding 28 per cent equity in the companies, he said.

This meant that 28 per cent of the companies' profits was owned by the government although it had not invested a sen in the companies.

"If the companies profit because dealings with the government are simplified and speeded up, the government will enjoy the profit too," he said.

He added that the government helped all companies although not all were successful and well-known.

Dr Mahathir and his wife, who arrived this morning in a special aircraft, later performed Friday prayers at the UNPAD mosque before visiting the office of the "Pikiran Rakyat" newspaper.

In the afternoon, he met Malaysians studying at the university and will stop over at Jakarta for a short visit before returning to Kuala Lumpur tomorrow.

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OPP NER AHH JK