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Engineers honour Dr Mahathir

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - Former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad was tonight conferred the Institute of Engineers' Distinguished Honorary Fellow for his contribution to the engineering profession and the nation.

Dr Mahathir is the first individual to receive this award, the highest recognition bestowed by IEM.

The presentation was held in conjunction with IEM's annual dinner and Awards Night at the Palace of Golden horses in Seri Kembangan, near here.

The citation, read by IEM past president Datuk Ahmad Zaidee Laidin, said Dr Mahathir, the fourth and longest-serving Prime Minister, had the gift of an abiding, passionate and all pervading concern for the well-being, progress and modernisation of Malaysia.

"The pace Dr Mahathir set was exuberant, exhilarating and, above all, hugely exciting with a myriad of possibilities." Dr Mahathir, the citation read, was determined to take Malaysia out of a "rubber and tin economy" and into a brave new world of expanded horizons and wealth creation driven by science, engineering and technology initiatives.

"It will not be often that the IEM will honour a medical practitioner but Dr Mahathir has achieved what engineers collectively seldom envision."

In his acceptance speech, Dr Mahathir said that as a boy he was very interested in engineering as it was an intriguing, complex and skilful profession.

"Engineers do wonderful things and without them we would not have come so far," he said.

He said the way a clock ticks away always fascinated him, so much so that he once dismantled one but failed to reassemble it.

He said engineers were a group of precise people and "I hope to speak like them.

"They are not people who say something and mean another."

IEM president Abang Abdullah Abang Ali presented the award.