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`Malaysia's success story is proof of Dr M's good leadership'

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Malaysia's success story is the manifestation of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's 22 years of visionary leadership, said Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim today.

At the launch of the 10-volume The Encyclopedia on Dr Mahathir bin Mohamad at the University of Oxford's Islamic Centre, London, he said Dr Mahathir was "more than qualified" to be called an Asian statesman or, in particular, "the builder of modern Malaysia".

Rais' speech was released here today.

Compared to other world leaders who were in public service for less than 10 years and yet had their thoughts and ideas compiled meticulously, Rais said the Prime Minister not only served his nation longer than most other leaders in their countries, but also brought upon the nation social and economic development through proper means.

"He (Dr Mahathir) did this not by virtue of shady political deals and manoeuvres but through a system of accepted laws," he said.

Having lectured in many countries, Dr Mahathir is highly regarded and respected by Third World and developing nations for his leadership and outspokenness on issues affecting these nations.

Quoting former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher at a public lecture in 1993, Rais said: "Few leaders earn the title of statesmen. But in Prime Minister Mahathir's case, there is no doubt that the accolade has been won by his achievements."

A proponent of Eastern values and ethics through his "Look East Policy" 18 years ago, Dr Mahathir had introduced the punch card system to promote punctuality, besides requiring all civil servants to wear name tags.

"It is not that he likes the West less, but he admires the work ethics of the East more," said Rais.

On Dr Mahathir's resilience in facing challenges posed by several Western leaders years back, Rais said the Prime Minister not only emerged unscathed but also managed to convince the world of his ideals.