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Proposal to rename KLIA as tribute to Dr Mahathir gets wide support

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - A great man deserves great tributes and for many, a proposal to rename the Kuala Lumpur International Airport after the fourth Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad is considered apt.

Umno vice-president Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib said the suggestion was a wonderful idea as the airport was one of the country's landmarks.

"This will serve as a tribute for what he has done for the development of the country."

However, Muhammad said Dr Mahathir's contributions were more than just physical developments like the KLIA.

"His biggest gift to Malaysia is to develop the country in all spheres that we can now stand side by side with other great nations."

Puteri Umno chief Datuk Azalina Othman Said welcomed the proposal.

"By renaming the airport, it will serve as a reminder, especially to foreigners, on how great Tun is," she said. She said Dr Mahathir was a strong believer in space exploration and when Malaysia was able to produce and launch her own spaceship, it should be named after him.

"That will be a better tribute to him."

They were commenting on Fomca president Datuk Hamdan Adnan's suggestion that KLIA be renamed Tun Dr Mahathir International Airport.

Social activist Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye described the proposal as sensible, saying Dr Mahathir was instrumental in getting the KLIA project started.

"Projects like the KLIA reflect Dr Mahathir's vision for the country. I understand that many countries named their airports after heads of state like the John F. Kennedy Airport in New York," he said.

Lee also suggested an institution be named after Dr Mahathir to preserve his legacy as a thinker, visionary and leader.

"Perhaps the Institute of Occidental Studies in Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia can be named after him. After all, it is he who urged Malaysians to be wary of the West's domination and the need to acquire knowledge to deal with them."

Academician Tan Sri Awang Had Salleh said there was no harm in renaming KLIA but believed Dr Mahathir deserved much more.

"In order to preserve the legacy of Tun's leadership, think-tanks devoted to the exploration of his ideas on economics, politics and education must be set up," he said.