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Dr Mahathir conferred Selangor's highest award

KLANG, Mon. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was tonight conferred Selangor's highest award, the "Darjah Kerabat Yang Amat Dihormati" (DK), by the Sultan of Selangor at Istana Alam Shah.

The award, presented at a special investiture by Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah, is in recognition of the services rendered by Dr Mahathir to the nation and Selangor during his 22-year tenure as Prime Minister.

The Sultan, the first Ruler to honour the Prime Minister for his services, said Dr Mahathir had been very close to his late father, the 11th Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah.

"My father co-operated and worked closely with Dr Mahathir when he was the King," he added.

The Ruler said he knew Dr Mahathir in the 1980s and always made it a point to read his books.

"I also know Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, who was born in Klang. I know her and her siblings well."

The Sultan said Dr Mahathir was a man of vision and mission and worked hard to realise his dreams which sometimes led to criticism from within and outside the country, especially in his struggles for the Malay race, religion and country.

"I must say that he is a successful leader who has brought about much development to the nation, besides ensuring peace and harmony among the races," he added.

The Sultan said it was due to Dr Mahathir's determination to see the Malays succeed that the community had achieved progress in many fields.

"He has opened the eyes of the community to globalisation and Malaysians are indeed indebted to him."

Sultan Sharafuddin said the Prime Minister had also given Selangor the opportunity to develop economically and to achieve its developed target status by 2005.

Malaysia's good standing in the world and being seen as a role model by many, especially among Islamic nations, was also the results of Dr Mahathir's efforts.

Sultan Sharafuddin said he prayed that the Prime Minister and wife would be blessed with good health and protected by Allah.

In his speech, Dr Mahathir thanked the Sultan, saying the award meant a lot to him and his family.

He also said he hoped the Sultan, the Raja Muda of Selangor and family members would be blessed with good health and longevity.

Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Khir Toyo described Dr Mahathir as the architect of modern Malaysia.

He said the Prime Minister had placed Malaysia on par with other nations, adding that Malaysians should emulate his many virtues, especially his fighting spirit.

Also present at the ceremony and a State banquet to mark the event were Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Cabinet members, State Government officials and members of the Selangor royal family.