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Rotary Int names Mahathir `Man of the Millennium'

Fadzil Ghazali

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was today awarded the Man of the Millennium Award by non-governmental organisation, (NGO) Rotary International District 3300.

Rotary International chose Dr Mahathir for the award because of his many contributions to the country, particularly in restoring Malaysia's economy which had suffered from its worse crisis two years ago.

It noted that under the leadership of Dr Mahathir, who himself was once a Rotarian, Malaysia has succeeded in pulling itself out of the economic and financial crises.

The capital control measures introduced by the Government, once mocked as unorthodox and archaic, are now praised by the international community as unique, boldly innovative and pragmatic, the long-established NGO said.

District 3300 governor Datuk Jaafar Mohamed Ali presented the award at the organisation's 65th conference in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. Also present was the Prime Minister's wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali.

The Rotary club, an organisation of business and professional leaders, provides humanitarian service, encourages high ethical standards in all vocations and helps build goodwill and peace.

Currently, District 3300 groups 53 clubs which cover most of the states in peninsular Malaysia.

In his speech earlier, Dr Mahathir said the future is not without challenges as the pace of technological change, the borderlessness of nations and the ever-increasing flow of information technology will influence society.

"The new era brings with it challenges that will require us to adapt swiftly so as to effectively reap enormous benefits," he added.

Dr Mahathir said the rich, the poor, the fortunate and the less fortunate must be given the opportunity to have equal access to this modern technology and infrastructure.

The Prime Minister also said District 3300's contribution to Malaysia can hardly be over emphasised, where the most significant contribution has been its avoidance of involvement in partisan politics.

"This has helped Malaysia attain its objective of creating a society predicated on the principles of harmonious living.

"Being political, Rotary International has discharged its duties and responsibilities to the Malaysian community without stirring any ill feelings among the racial groups or political factions.

"Being non-partisan, non prejudiced and non discriminating has earned for itself a high regard as a truly professional NGO," he added.

Dr Mahathir said the humanitarian approach of Rotarian International in providing community service worldwide, has helped to alleviate some of these miseries and sufferings in the world today.

"Let us hope this spirit of friendship among the numerous communities worldwide will further promote world peace and understanding, making it a better place of all of us," he added.

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