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16th CONVOCATION CEREMONY

Towards Global Prominence

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UTP appoints Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi as Chancellor

Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's career as a civil servant, political leader, diplomat and statesman spanned 45 years. He was born in 1939 into a prominent religious family in Penang.

Graduating in Islamic Studies from the University of Malaya, he started his career in the Malaysian civil service in 1964. He resigned from his position as deputy secretary-general in the Ministry of Culture, Youth & Sports to become a politician in 1978. Twenty-five years later, he became the prime minister in October 2003.

He had held various positions in the government, including minister in the prime minister's department, education minister, defence minister, foreign affairs minister, home affairs minister and finance minister.

Excelling in diplomacy and international relations, as prime minister, he sought to improve bilateral and multilateral cooperation, actively leading (among

others) the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), when Malaysia assumed the chair of these international organisations.

He introduced the concept of Islam Hadhari to guide development efforts in Malaysia and the wider Islamic world. This move towards progressive Islamic civilisation seeks to make Muslims understand that progress is enjoined by Islam. It is an approach that is compatible with modernity, and yet, firmly rooted in the noble values and injunctions of the faith.

Islam Hadhari espouses 10 fundamental principles which were accepted by Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

He focused on human capital development as a key pillar of his administration. This went beyond strengthening the education quality in Malaysia, to enhancing mindsets and infusing ethical, moral and

religious values during lessons. Science and technology was further promoted, while innovation and creativity was pushed to the fore.

As chairman of the OIC, he waged a war against poverty and the lack of knowledge and development in the Muslim world. Besides emphasising the enhancement of education in OIC countries, Malaysia sought to share its experience in national economy development by initiating a series of self-help projects involving OIC members and the Islamic Development Bank. The immediate purpose was to generate income and provide employment, while the long-term intention was to assist OIC countries in upgrading their governance and development efforts.

He also sought to provide an economic face to the OIC, in a bid to enhance trade, business and investment linkages between Member countries. The World Islamic Economic Forum (WIEF),

of which he is the founder patron, continues to be an important gathering of government and business leaders from the Muslim world and beyond. International Halal fora and trade expositions, initiated by Malaysia, are now held regularly throughout the globe to advance the halal industry, for the benefit of the ummah.

He married the late Tun Endon Mahmood in 1965 and after 40 years, he lost her to cancer on October 20, 2005. They have two children and seven grandchildren. He later married Tun Jeanne Abdullah on June 9, 2007.

Abdullah stepped down as prime minister on April 3, 2009. He remains committed to pursuing development, promoting progressive Islam and enhancing understanding between the Muslim and Western worlds.

He is the chairman of the Malaysian Institute of Islamic Understanding (IKIM) and patron



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of the Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies (IAIS) in Kuala Lumpur, which he established in 2009.

He is the founder patron of the World Islamic Economic Forum (WIEF). He holds several government advisory roles, including PETRONAS, Malaysia's Regional Growth Corridors and Malaysia Airlines. Internationally, he is the member of the Inter Action Council (IAC), board member of BOAO Forum for Asia (BFA), and chairperson of the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group.