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Leader who memorises a 3,000-word speech

MALAYSIAN EX-PREMIER DID NOT MISS EVEN A PUNCTUATION MARK

By Muawia E. Ibrahim

ABU DHABI — Delivering a speech at a conference here in Abu Dhabi last week, Dr Mahathir Mohamad, former Malaysian prime minister, held his audience spell-bound not just by his excellent speech content-wise but also by his exceptional talent to completely learn it by heart.

"This is amazing. I can't believe this," said one of the participants. "I mean, at least in my case, sometimes I can't even remember my residence phone number and I am just 35. But for a man of his age... it's really remarkable to have such a sharp memory".

Dr Mahathir's 3,000-word speech had been distributed to the audience at the conference. It started with a note which read "Please check



DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD

against delivery".

Almost all the people in the jam-packed hall of the Emirates Palace in Abu Dhabi, including this reporter, were carefully matching

the original with what he was delivering.

Amazingly, Dr Mahathir did not miss even a punctuation mark leave alone a sentence or a word.

Dr Mahathir was speaking at the Breakthrough Leadership Excellence in Dynamic World Conference in Abu Dhabi at Emirates Palace on Mindset Change: A Leadership in A Changing World.

The address included 42 points starting from Jahiliah Arabs, passing through the Christian era in the 15th Century and ending with today's Islamic world.

As prime minister, Mahathir had vigorously upheld Asian and Malaysian values, decried what he sees as hypocrisy or decadence in the West, and entered chin-first into some famous international rows, particularly with Britain, Australia and the US.

His calculated snubs have been encapsulated in such slogans as "Look East" and "Buy British Last".