

# Dr M creating ripples

## PM recognised as one of the world's most influential men

**KUALA LUMPUR:** In just a year of his tenure as Malaysia's seventh Prime Minister, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has been recognised as one of the world's most influential men.

He was named the Muslim Man of the Year by The Muslim 500, a ranking of the world's 500 most influential Muslims, in January.

In April, Dr Mahathir was ranked among the 100 most influential individuals in the world for the year 2019 by *Time* magazine.

And earlier this month, Fortune.com, ranked Dr Mahathir 47th in its World's 50 Greatest Leaders' list.

The three publications described Dr Mahathir, 93, as an extraordinary man for leading the coalition of (formerly) opposition parties, Pakatan Harapan, to win the general election last year and for being re-elected as Malaysia's Prime Minister.

As the oldest Prime Minister in the world, many know Dr Mahathir as a bold and vocal leader, who stands firm on his decisions and who is trustworthy and disciplined, especially in terms of punctuality.

In his speech at the United Nations General Assembly in New York on Sept 29 last year, Dr Mahathir made a bold call for a reform of the world body and suggested that a veto should not be by just one permanent member but by at least two and backed by three non-perma-

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**Prof Dr Azizuddin Mohd Sani**

ment members of the UN Security Council.

He also captured global attention when he condemned the Myanmar government for the massacre of Rohingyas in Rakhine, as well as in Israel for breaking international laws and moral codes.

In November last year, Dr Mahathir was also conferred the "Grand Cordon of the Order of the Paulownia Flowers" by Emperor Akihito of Japan.

The conferment of Japan's highest award followed the contributions by the Prime Minister in strengthening the bilateral ties between Malaysia and Japan.

Universiti Putra Malaysia Faculty of Modern Language and Communication lecturer Dr Syed Agil Alsagoff

said Dr Mahathir was recognised as a credible leader as his thoughts and ideas were praised by many world leaders.

The Premier, who had also held the chair of the Organisation for Islamic Cooperation, formulated various strategies for the unification of Arab nations to break away from the influence of the United States and Israel.

"His criticisms of the Israeli occupation of Palestine and the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, also encouraged and motivated the Arab nations to support his leadership and recognised him as a respected world leader.

"Dr Mahathir's success in transforming Malaysia from a third world country into a developing country also attracted West Asian countries to emulate his political leadership.

"In fact, East Asian countries have also made him an exemplary model in their economic and political empowerment," he said.

Syed Agil said Dr Mahathir was also regarded as a Muslim statesman, who transformed Malaysia into a model for the Muslim world and would always be remembered as a Malaysian leader who had channelled assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina to rebuild itself after the Balkan country was involved in a war in the 1990s.

According to Universiti Utara

Malaysia lecturer in politics and international relations Prof Dr Azizuddin Mohd Sani, Dr Mahathir has been consistent in championing world issues including those involving the Palestinians, the Rohingya as well as developing or underdeveloped countries.

He said Dr Mahathir established the Kuala Lumpur War Crimes Tribunal to "put on trial" leaders of the countries involved in the Iraq war in 2003.

"By his boldness in voicing out his opinions, we can see that Dr Mahathir obviously wants Malaysia to continue being the Asian Tiger unafraid of voicing out global issues," he said.

At the same time, he said West Asian leaders continued looking up to Dr Mahathir to the extent of regarding him as their "voice" in fighting Western oppression.

Syed Agil also noted that other countries wanted to emulate Malaysia, especially after it was able to make a political transformation under the leadership of a former prime minister appointed for the second time to hold the highest political office.

"Dr Mahathir is regarded as the driving force of reforms and transformation in the country's administration since the first time he was appointed as Prime Minister and held the post for 22 years," he said.

— Bernama