

Prof Yuan LongPing Wins Mahathir Science Award 2011
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KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 27 (Bernama) -- The Director-General of China's National Hybrid Rice Research and Development Centre, Professor Yuan LongPing (rpt LongPing), has been announced as the winner of the Mahathir Science Award 2011.

The announcement was made by Academy of Sciences Malaysia president Tan Sri Dr Ahmad Tajuddin Ali at a press conference here today. Also present was chairman of Mahathir Science Award Foundation Tun Ahamad Sarji Abdul Hamid.

"The award is conferred in recognition of his courage in independent thinking in rice breeding resulting in the innovative development of hybrid rice, a staple food of the tropics, that has revolutionised global rice production and sustainability," Tajuddin said.

The Mahathir Science Award was launched by former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad in 2004, in recognition of scientists and institutions who had contributed to cutting edge tropical research that had an impact on society and carries a cash prize of RM100,000, accompanied by a gold medal and a certificate.

Professor Yuan also known as "Father of Hybrid Rice" was born on Sept 7, 1930 in Beijing and was the first to develop hybrid rice varieties in the 1970s, which had been grown in dozens of countries in Africa, America, and Asia, thus providing a robust food source in high famine risk areas.

Introduced by the Academy of Sciences Malaysia, the award is given to researchers who have made internationally recognised breakthroughs in pioneering tropical research, in the field of tropical medicine, tropical agriculture, tropical architecture and engineering and tropical natural resources.

The Academy of Sciences Malaysia received 19 nominations from scientists and institutions from around the world and two scientists were shortlisted for the award.

The Mahathir Science Award is bestowed on any scientist, institution or organisation, world wide, in recognition or contribution and innovation towards solving problems of the tropics through science and technology and to be rewarded on the most deserving based strictly on merit.

The poll was made by a selected community and their contributions were evaluated by experts from abroad which included Nobel prize winners.

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