

## **PM praises academicians, higher education institutions**

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PUTRAJAYA, Nov 27 (Bernama) -- The achievements of staff at higher education institutions in meeting the country's aspirations are encouraging, Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said although there was still plenty of room for improvement, the institutes and academicians had charted numerous achievements recognised internationally.

Among other things, the national higher education system has received the world's attention through Malaysia's appointment as a member of the Unesco Executive Board which enables it to contribute ideas and best practices for education.

"Although they are often targets for criticism, the government is certainly still proud of the achievements demonstrated by higher education institutions and local academics.

"These achievements contribute to the strategy of placing national education at the international level," he said in his speech at the National Academic Awards (AAN) 2018 here today.

Also present were Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Education Minister Dr Maszlee Malik and Director-General of Higher Education Datin Paduka Siti Hamisah Tapsir.

In the meantime, Dr Mahathir said academicians were the most important group in producing graduates capable of facing challenges of the future.

With that role, future-proof graduates will not only master knowledge, but also possess values and the wisdom in dealing with the complex challenges of life, he said.

Dr Mahathir said efforts to cultivate knowledge and values among graduates were not only dependent on the greatness of infrastructure and facilities, but rather through academics who understood, delved-into and embraced the nation's education philosophy.

"There is a challenge for academicians in higher education institutions on how they can balance their responsibilities as educators and at the same time, produce scientific journals and conduct research for reference by other people," he said.

Speaking on the AAN, the Prime Minister hoped that the annual award which recognised important figures in education would encourage others to raise their standards in achieving excellence.

The AAN, he added, was also a statement by the government that it strived to improve higher education, and gave it due attention.

At the event, economic expert and former member of the Council of Eminent Persons Prof Dr Jomo Kwame Sundaram was selected as the recipient of the National Academic Figure Award, taking home RM200,000 cash, a trophy as well as a certificate.

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