

Dr Mahathir a statesman for Malaysia, Muslim world - Imran Khan

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From Kamarul Ariffin Md Yassin

ISLAMABAD, March 22 (Bernama) -- Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan describes his Malaysian counterpart Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad as a Muslim statesman who has transformed Malaysia into a model for the Muslim world.

He said Pakistan took pride on the way Malaysia had developed and raised the standard of living under the premiership of Dr Mahathir

“We followed (the development) very closely as Pakistan has always had good relationship with Malaysia. We admire you for that,” he said in a joint press conference with Dr Mahathir after the Malaysia-Pakistan delegation bilateral meeting here Friday.

Imran said he and Pakistan also admired Dr Mahathir for taking stand on issues which affected the Muslim world, where unfortunately very few Muslim leaders will do that.

“Like the war on terrorism, the way it affected the Muslim world. The way Islamophobia has spread in the western world. The way Muslims are treated because of confusing and deliberate political struggle.

“Any crime that is committed by a Muslim, immediately the whole 1.3 billion Muslims will be blamed for the crime. This was reflected in the Christchurch killing, a terrorist shooting innocent people, women and children in the mosque, without feeling regretful. We in the Muslim world have been watching you take the stand for what affected the Muslims,” he said.

Meanwhile, Imran said that in the Muslim world there are two leaders who stand out on

international issues and transformed the society, they are Dr Mahathir and current Turkey President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

“We watch Malaysia transform and how the standard of living and per capita income had gone up. Now Pakistani labour starts to head for Malaysia.. jobs created so labour from Pakistan will go to Malaysia,” he said.

He said Dr Mahathir and Erdogan were two examples of how statesmanship changed the country and society.

“ During the 1998 Southeast Asia economic crisis, Malaysia was the only one that managed to get out of the crisis through homegrown solutions. We Pakistan now face difficult economic situation ..and so many things to do to get out from it,” he said.

Imran also said he and Dr Mahathir had discussed various ways how Malaysia went up and one of the reasons was foreign direct investment (FDI) and technology transfer.

“ We are already thinking about that in getting FDI and technology transfer. Besides that, one area we can get very quick return is to learn from Malaysia’s experience in tourism. Malaysia, from what we were told generate almost US\$22 billion from tourism. Pakistan with vast resources generate nothing from tourism. We have discussed how to seek help from Malaysia to develop the tourism industry,” he said.

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