

PREPARE TO FACE CHALLENGES: PM

'Ignore rumours'

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MALAYSIANS have been urged by the Prime Minister to ignore rumours started by irresponsible quarters who are out to discredit the Government and to brace themselves to face the challenges ahead.

These are the two resolutions Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad wants the people to adopt for 1987.

In his New Year message over RTM last night, Dr Mahathir Mohamad said: "These are the two resolutions the people should adopt to help restore the country's economy.

"We know that there are ill-founded rumours designed to benefit certain people. All their stories have been proven to be false. Hence, there is no reason to believe the rumours."

He said rumours had been around since early this year that the Government was divid-

ed, weak and scandalous.

As a result of these rumours, people were said to have lost their confidence in the Government. He added that the rumours had also, to a certain extent, dampened the economic climate and discourage investors.

On the second resolution, Dr Mahathir said, Malaysians must fulfil their responsibilities with a sense of commitment and dedication to meet the challenges ahead.

"With this in mind, our overall performance and production cost will improve and Malaysia will become more competitive in the world market," he said.

"However, this does not mean that only those involved in the industry should become more productive. Every individual, irrespective of his or her duties,

should also work towards this end," he said.

If the two resolutions were to be observed, the economy will recover and Malaysians will be able to enjoy a good life, he said.

He described the year 1986 as a trying year compounded with all kinds of challenges.

"Nonetheless, we have managed to surmount the trying times and have saved the country through our grits and tenacity. Malaysians should be proud of this success.

"We should face the challenges of 1987 with these same determination. Malaysians should also destroy all negative elements found in society. In essence, we should work together to meet the challenges ahead."

Dr Mahathir, however, stressed that no amount of amendments or enforcement of laws can ensure the success of

economic recovery.

In the final analysis, he said the recovery depends on our attitude to compete with other countries in terms of trade.

Pertaining to this, Malaysia can only compete successfully if our production costs are low, without having to compromise on quality and delivery time.

"Although the call to reduce wage can help in the production cost, what is important is that the overall cost of a product can be lowered. If managers and employees can produce whatever goods at a lower cost, and can deliver on schedule, we will be able to compete with others on a better footing."

He said that a general election was held in August to show that people still have faith in the Barisan Nasional.

"The results tell all. We won four-fifth of the seats in the De-

wan Rakyat. This should also quash allegations which say that the people do not have confidence in the Government.

"Unfortunately, certain groups and political parties still try to create uncertainties, especially in the economic recovery of our country. They still claim that there is a crisis of confidence."

As a result of their action, Dr Mahathir said there is a capital flight which was bad for the country.

He said the Government move to amend the Industrial Coordination Act and relax requirements of the New Economic Policy came under criticisms from certain quarters which wanted to hamper the economic recovery.

However, the Government was able to minimise the adverse effects, he said.