

Will of people will triumph, says PM

By PAUL GABRIEL

ALOR STAR: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad remains confident that the will of the people will always triumph.

This is because in a democracy, the people are the true rulers, the Prime Minister said yesterday.

He also said the people's firm belief in democracy was the main reason for peace and progress of the country.

He said the people had shown good resolve in facing up to past challenges and were even more matured and sophisticated now.

Although Malaysia was still a fairly young democracy, the people had learnt fast and coped well with the challenges, he added in an address to his Kubang Pasu constituents over the move to remove the Rulers' legal immunity.

Dr Mahathir recalled that it was the people, including himself, who had swung the tide against the British after the Rulers conceded to the Malayan Union proposal in 1946.

"We have experienced from the history of the Malayan Union caper. The lesson to learn is that the Rulers cannot be handed power and be allowed to take the people for granted.

"In the old times, the people were often made the victims because the Rulers were vested with power.

"We are amending the Constitution to put a sure end to this past," he said.

Menteri Besar Tan Sri Haji Osman Aroff was also present with other state Umno leaders.

Dr Mahathir, who spoke for almost two hours, stressed that nobody was above the law and leaders as well as the Rulers were accountable to the people.

As Prime Minister, he said he was subject to the law and was always careful and conscious of his actions to keep to the rules.

"We are subject to the law but have nothing to fear. This is because

there is no intention (on our part) to break the law.

"I ask, why are the Rulers afraid to be subject to the law?"

Dr Mahathir said the amendments were necessary as the government could no longer leave it to the good faith of the Rulers not to harm the people, adding that the people had suffered in silence for long and were feeling relieved with the move to amend the Constitution.

He said the government had approved millions of ringgit for the Rulers because of their persistence in seeking favours.

He questioned the fairness of the Rulers in squandering the people's money and the nation's wealth with their lavish lifestyles when the people had to work hard.

"As Prime Minister, I have to keep long working schedules but get so much lower than them (Rulers). But this is not the issue.

"We only intend to remove their (legal) immunity as the matter was getting out of hand."

Dr Mahathir said he considered it important to meet his constituents to explain the reasons for the amendments as he was accountable to the people who elected him.