

# PM: Global peace vital for growth

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By NIZAM ISA

KUALA LUMPUR: Soldiers sent on peacekeeping duties overseas are part of the country's contribution towards global peace, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

The Prime Minister said a peaceful environment was important to a developing country such as Malaysia to enable it to achieve developed status.

"Chaos and mayhem will make it impossible for us to achieve the developed status. That is why when we are defend-

ing the others, we are actually defending ourselves," he said at the Malaysian ex-servicemen gathering at Stadium Negara yesterday.

He said the Government understood the dangers and the sacrifice of the soldiers who had been sent to carry out such a responsibility.

"That is why we will make sure that they are well prepared every time we send them abroad," he added.

Dr Mahathir also said that as an economically stable country, the time was right for Malaysia to

find as many "allies" as possible willing to help when the need arises.

However, Dr Mahathir said, Malaysia still needed strong military capabilities for its own protection.

"History has proven that a powerful and developed nation can be destroyed if the people depend on outsiders for protection," he said.

He said that was why the "spirit of sacrifice" should be instilled among the younger generation.

On the ex-servicemen, he said the Government would give priority to the

Malaysian Ex-Servicemen Association's proposal for the setting up of a revolving fund for members.

More than 15,000 people attended the gathering which was organised by the association. Among those present were Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and association president Datuk Haji Zainal Abidin Johari.

The association also awarded Dr Mahathir, Najib and former Armed Forces Chief Tan Sri Jen (Rtd) Hamid Bidin with the *Pingat Darjah Bakti Wira Terpuji*.