

PM: PROSPERITY ONLY WITH PEACE

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KUALA LUMPUR: The long-term economic growth of East Asia is tied to peace and stability, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said last night.

For this reason, there can be no compromise on law and order if the East Asian nations are to continue as major players in the global economy.

Dr Mahathir hoped while Western experts studied the remarkable growth and progress of East Asia, they would not try to impose Western norms and standards on the region.

He said although the dynamism and

robustness prevailing in this region would continue, they must realise the road ahead was not going to be paved with gold.

"As young nations evolving our own systems of values and practices, we need to maintain our rapid progress. We should be always ready to learn from others but the choices should be ours to make.

"We must continue to work hard. We must protect the gains we have achieved by maintaining continued peace and stability within our own borders. In this regard there can be no compromise on law and order.

"Without stability there can be no long-term economic growth. And without national consensus there can be no stability," he said at the official

opening of the *World Leadership Conference* organised by the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute last night.

Dr Mahathir said the people needed to adapt themselves to changing circumstances and conditions.

"To be successful in managing change, managers and leaders must be able to change their mind-sets, their paradigms and their attitudes. Leadership is not a matter of words as it is one of attitudes and actions," he said.

He said it was thus a challenge for leaders to be able to motivate their followers with a vision that could provide strategic direction and to help them change their attitudes and behaviour.

The Prime Minister said Malaysia

was a lucky country but its success did not come through sheer luck alone. He attributed it to the courage and wisdom of its past leaders who were prepared to embrace change and motivate the people to accept change.

He outlined three major leadership challenges of the 21st century that Malaysia would face:

- THE task of future leaders to maintain the economic prosperity presently prevailing in the country with sustainable development;

- THE challenge of keeping the nation united which was tough, given the different ethnic, religious and cultural groups; and

- THE problem of maintaining its international competitiveness where

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the World Economic Forum had ranked it the fourth most competitive in the world.

He said the bonding of a united nation had been the greatest challenge of this generation and it would be no less a challenge for the future generations.

"We should look at conditions in Bosnia, Rwanda, the former USSR and others to realise the

consequences of tribal, ethnic and religious conflicts," he said.

Dr Mahathir said companies must renew themselves through carefully-planned leadership development and succession planning.

"Likewise, nations too must undergo leadership renewal from time to time," he said.

"Here in Malaysia, we are fortunate that leadership renewal

has been smooth and leadership transitions have been peaceful and orderly."

Dr Mahathir said business or management ethics was equally important and managers and corporate leaders should have high moral and ethical standards.

He said education and human resource development would remain the cornerstone of future plans and strategies.