

Dr M: We will continue to voice our support for weak nations

Speaking up for justice

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By Manan Osman

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — Malaysia will continue to oppose injustice, cruelty and arm-twisting tactics against weak nations, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said Malaysia would continue to voice its views and ideas frankly and boldly at international fora in the interest of justice.

"Malaysia is vocal at such fora not because it wants to project itself but because it firmly upholds its principles," he said in his congratulatory speech and loyalty pledge to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Ja'afar at the investiture ceremony in conjunction with His Majesty's 72nd birthday at Istana Negara.

Dr Mahathir said in line with its principles to contribute towards international peace, Malaysia had sent troops to serve under the United Nations in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

He also called on the private sector to be more aggressive and dynamic in venturing into new markets, besides upgrading their efficiency and productivity in an effort to maintain their competitive edge and continue to become the prime mover of the nation's economic growth.

"The private sector should not only look at the investment prospect in the country but for long-term benefit, it should find investments outside the country," he said.

He said the Government on its part, would try its best to establish a favourable climate for trade and investment.

"Efforts have been made to improve and modernise

the infrastructure system such as ports and electricity supply to overcome any obstacle faced by entrepreneurs.

"If Malaysia can improve its competitive advantage, it will be able to achieve greater success. Malaysia now lies in the 19th spot among trading nations in the world," he added.

Dr Mahathir said the country's competitive edge was its low labour cost and therefore it was important that this be maintained. Workers' wages should rise with increasing productivity.

He said there had been attempts to wipe out this competitive advantage by increasing wages to a high level.

The Prime Minister also said that the people were now more aware of the need for unity and co-operation.

"Racial and religious clashes in several countries which resulted in the loss of a lot of lives and destruction to properties certainly have made Malaysians realise the need to maintain racial harmony."

Dr Mahathir also said the Government would continue to take steps to control price increases so that the people would not be affected by inflation.

He expressed the hope that the King would undertake his responsibility with fairness and in compliance with the laws and the Constitution to further improve his image as the country practised parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy.