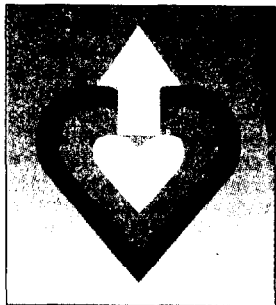


PM pays tribute to people as key to nation's success

By AZHAR GHAZALI

ON the eve of the country's 37th Merdeka Day, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad paid tribute to the people as the key to the nation's success.

The Prime Minister said it is the support and cooperation of the people that enable the Government to develop Malaysia as the most advanced among developing countries, improve the living



standards, and increase the per capita income of Malaysians.

"Our success is not merely because of the Government's policies and programmes. If not for the positive response from the people in general — the investors, managers and workers — we definitely will not be progressing as we are doing now.

"Due to the response, effort and positive attitude of the people towards the Government's policies and incentives, the development objectives have now been achieved," the Prime Minister said in his Merdeka Day message over Radio Television Malaysia last night.

He said in development, no one denies that Malaysia has done well. Among developing nations, Malaysia is far ahead. "Our achievements have reached a level whereby international agencies question whether we should continue to be classified as a developing nation or not."

(Recently the UN Development Programme announced that Malaysia will no longer be eligible for soft loans as it will be graduated out of its aid scheme. Tokyo had earlier reclassified Malaysia as a "middle-income country", excluding it from future grants under its Official Development Assistance).

Dr Mahathir said without the positive response from the people, no government will be able to improve the country's performance.

But with a positive attitude of the people, the Prime Minister expressed confidence that Malaysia's aspirations of becoming a developed nation by the year 2020 will be realised.

Nevertheless, Malaysia can achieved even more if the people are able to instil greater self control and to be more responsible. "I would like to call on all of us to make the 38th year of our Independence a year for change of attitude towards ourselves.

"The Government will carry out all its responsibilities, but the people must build a culture of according priority to responsibility towards oneself and society.

"God willing, if we can get rid of bad habits that do not benefit us, this country will not only progress faster, but progress without any of the

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Dr M pays tribute to the people

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negative phenomena polluting the West," he said.

Dr Mahathir said many of the adverse and negative phenomena — drug abuse, road accidents, fires, loafing, building collapse, environmental degradation, and many others — are inflicted by Malaysians on themselves.

The nation in 2020 is envisaged as one that is more prosperous, with civilisation shielded from collapse.

"For this we have to mould a suitable culture from now," he said, adding that Independence Day is an appropriate occasion to make a resolution that "not only should we grab opportunities to boost our progress and prosperity but we should also eradicate non-beneficial practices."