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Dr M dedicates his awards to the people

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad dedicated the two international awards he received recently to all Malaysians, including leaders of opposition parties and the non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

"The awards are not for me alone but for Malaysians and leaders, including the opposition and NGOs who contributed towards making Malaysia a successful country.

"They are for Malaysians who adopt a moderate attitude, who wants peace and give the Government the opportunity to implement various development programmes and achieve success for the country.

"So, both awards I sincerely receive on behalf of Malaysians," he said at a dinner hosted by the Government to honour the Prime Minister for winning the King Faisal International Prize for Service to Islam and the Jawaharlal Nehru International Understanding Award.

Saudi Arabia's King Faisal International Prize was presented to Dr Mahathir on March 22 and India's Jawaharlal Nehru award on December 20 last year, the latter for his dedication in assisting the developing nations.

The Prime Minister said the people deserve the awards for striving to live in harmony rather than resorting to riots and social disturbances that can jeopardise the country's quest for success.

The Prime Minister said he is also fortunate to lead a country that is supportive of the leaders, unlike in some other countries.

"There are many other able and capable leaders who should receive the awards but they are not conferred the recognition because of problems in their respective countries," he said, adding that political stability and public commitment are among the key factors that determine the success of a nation.

"I am fortunate to lead a country where there are no major problems. For example, when the country was confronted with the issue of the get-rich-quick scheme, or Pak Man Telo, there were no riots or attempts to throw me out of the Government, unlike in some countries," he added.

Some people may disagree with the Government but they never create serious problem, he added.

"The opposition opposes the Government but there are no riots or no dynamites are lighted or grenades thrown during election campaigns. In Malaysia, this does not occur," he added.

Similarly, the Congress of Unions of Employees in the Public and Civil Services (Cuepacs) do not resort to industrial action to demand for better wages.

"When Cuepacs disagrees with the Government's terms, it negotiates further until an agreement is reached. They may seek different perks later... but no riots," he added.

Dr Mahathir also at tributed the international recognition he has won to Malaysia's foreign policy of wanting to make as many friends as possible.

"We need to have more friends than enemies.

"For example, if we invest in other countries, and when these countries we have assisted become rich, we will also benefit in terms of enlarging our investments there.

"Sometimes, we may be too outspoken in criticising certain countries but we are only exercising our right to freedom of speech, like in other

countries.

In any case, Dr Mahathir said, Malaysia does not criticise weak countries.

"Instead, we try to help them," he said.

He added that without friends, a Malaysian would not have been able to secure the post of President of the UN General Assembly.

The international recognition also reflects the success of the people in regaining their integrity.

"We were invaded by foreigners in 1511 (the Portuguese in Malacca) and it took more than 400 years to regain our integrity, the Malays' integrity especially.

"We do not ask to be respected because we know even if we ask hundreds or thousands of times, other countries will not respect us.

"To get respect, we have to achieve success and the two awards are part of the international recognition of our success," he said.

Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, in his welcoming speech, reminded Malaysians not to be lulled into complacency but continue to work hard to achieve even greater success.

Vision and hard work, he said, are two key elements in ensuring success in nation-building.

"We are fortunate to have a leader, in the form of Dr Mahathir, who has the combination par excellence of the two qualities," he said.

He added that no Malaysian has ever received two awards of such high international standing.

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