

Be on guard against graft: PM

By KAMARUL YUNUS

GOVERNMENT employees were yesterday reminded to uphold the good image of the civil service by being professional, remain non-partisan and be on constant guard against corruption.

The Government's increased dealings with the corporate sector arising from the country's privatization programme have created greater opportunities for graft and it is important that civil servants maintain their professionalism in carrying out their duties, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

"We may think that our corrupt practice can escape

detection... don't be too sure because when it is finally detected, stern action will taken," he told 500 top civil servants at an assembly at Intan, the national institute of public administration in Bukit Kiara, Kuala Lumpur.

"We will then face imprisonment and a shattered future," he said, adding that professionalism is the key determinant of an efficient administration.

"It means non-partisan service... not favouring any one side. The objective is simply to discharge our tasks."

All government departments, including the military, must continue to be professional.

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The military has always served the Government of the day and it has never been its role to formulate domestic or foreign policies, the Prime Minister said.

"The military does not side any political party and take a stand of its own. Its loyalty is not to the commanders or other officers but to the Government of the day."

For this reason, unlike in some other countries, Malaysia has never had any problem with military power struggles.

And while civil servants may have their own political inclinations, these personal considerations should not interfere with the carrying out of their duties.

Dr Mahathir said he has been reminding the people of the threat that globalisation poses for Malaysia and other developing countries not because he wanted to instil fear in civil servants to secure political support.

"It is because what we fear has already happened," he said.

"As for those wishing for a certain government to fall, don't think the incoming government will be safe... if it does not kowtow to foreign powers, it will be threatened and brought down as well... and the country is colonised again," the Prime Minister said.

"We have been managing our finances very well as

can be seen from the fact that we did not have to seek the International Monetary Fund's assistance to revive our economy.

"Our success in improving the country's economy should provide us with the confidence to face the challenges and problems brought about by globalisation," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said it is crucial for civil servants to master the use of computers and information technology to enhance performance and productivity given that Malaysia is moving towards electronic government.

The Prime Minister later held a close-door dialogue with the officers.