

M'sians of integrity honoured posthumously

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KUALA LUMPUR: Three prominent Malaysians posthumously received the National integrity Award from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday for having held significantly to just practices and principles during their lifetime.

The award, presented under the auspices of the Kuala Lumpur Society for Transparency and Integrity, was given to former Deputy Prime Minister Tun Dr Ismail Abdul Rahman, former Finance Minister Tun Tan Siew Sin and the first Malaysian governor of the Central Bank Tun Ismail Mohd Ali, for their unquestionable integrity throughout their service to the nation.

In his address, Dr Mahathir said the integrity of the recipients was the ingredient required to achieve a peaceful, progressive and successful society.

"The personal virtues and qualities, as exemplified by the three Tuns, which we so much admire, are even more relevant today than ever before as we struggle to strike a balance between material progress and spiritual development. Both are necessary ingredients in the process of nation building.

"We have seen a steady deterioration and erosion of ethical standards of behaviour in both the public and business sectors, with predictable consequences for sustainable human development, not only here in Malaysia, but unfortunately in many of the countries we look up to," he added.

He said that corruption, for instance,

was a block to sustainable development.

Dr Mahathir said that Malaysia must compare its public behaviour with Finland, which came out as the world's least corrupt and most ethical country yearly in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index.

"I know we have some way to go, but given the level of public support the Anti-Corruption Agency now enjoys, and the wide-ranging anti-corruption measures now firmly in place, we can get to be among the highest ranking countries," he said.

In his opening address, Transparency International Malaysia president Tunku Abdul Aziz Tunku Ibrahim said the private sector was a "hard nut to crack" as many companies believed that facilitation payments make the wheels of government turn smoothly.

Tengku Tan Sri Ahmad Rithaudeen, Tan Sri Rama Iyer and Andrew Sheng delivered citations for Dr Ismail, Tan and Ismail respectively.

Mohd Tawfik Ismail, Tan Siok Choo as well as Ahmad Kamal Ismail and Iskandar Ismail received the awards on behalf of their families.