

# Quality of civil service 'better'

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** The good news: Malaysia last year upped its scores in three areas of governance, including the quality of its public and civil services and control of corruption.

The bad news: The country has dropped in its levels of freedom of expression and free media, as well as in political stability.

In the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators released yesterday, the country's scores for last year compared with 2005 improved in government effectiveness, regulatory quality and control of corruption.

Its score for the rule of law, which takes into account perceptions of safety, violence, police and courts, did not budge from its 65.7 per cent score in 2005 and 2004.

Under six components — voice and accountability, political stability, government effectiveness, regulatory quali-

ty, rule of law and control of corruption — the WGI aims to present a picture of how countries have improved or declined in governance.

Aart Kraay, lead economist in the World Bank's Development Research Group, and co-author of the report said measuring governance posed unique challenges.

"Governance is complex and has many different aspects, and so no single indicator can fully capture a country's governance performance," he said in a statement.

"It is, therefore, important to draw on the wide variety of sources on governance. The Worldwide Governance Indicators are a way of collecting and summarising this wealth of information, based on the experiences and insights of stakeholders worldwide."

For government effectiveness, Malaysia went from 79.1 per cent to 80.6 per cent, from 65.4 per cent to 69.8 per cent for regulatory quality, and from 63.6 per cent to 68 per

cent last year for control of corruption.

It scored 38 per cent in voice and accountability last year compared with 46.2 per cent in 2005, and 58.7 per cent in political stability compared with 63 per cent previously.

The report showed that the usual countries with top scores in governance areas, for example, control of corruption had repeated their performance, such as Finland, Iceland and Denmark, and the lowest rankers such as Myanmar and North Korea remained at the bottom.

"From 1998 to last year, Kenya, Niger and Sierra Leone have shown marked improvements in voice and accountability."

Emerging economies, the report said, were matching rich countries in governance.

Over a dozen developing countries such as Slovenia, Chile and Botswana score higher on key dimensions of governance than industrialised countries such as Greece or Italy.