

Dr Mahathir is leading the 'coalescing' forces ahead

WITH Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad heading the government again, things are looking better for the political landscape in the country.

Malaysians are proudly saying that he is at the centre of the action leading the "coalescing" forces ahead and leaving the "collapsing" forces far behind.

Dr Mahathir, since becoming the seventh prime minister, has visited 22 countries.

He first visited Japan, the country that inspired his Look East Policy, the first of its kind in the world. From this trip, he secured the much-needed bond loans from Japan. He was also honoured with the country's

highest award in recognition of his efforts at moving Japan-Malaysia relations forward.

Next was China. His visit sealed Malaysia's interest to remain as China's partner in realising her Belt and Road Initiative for the region.

In the pipeline are projects that include assistance for Malaysia's third car project, 5G technology and infrastructure development financing.

As "coalescing" factors, these visits brought on track Dr Mahathir's wish to make the country "a roaring tiger" again.

Goodwill and credit facilities at competitive rates, coupled with the promise of long-term

partnership with these two countries, will steer the economy to a buoyant phase.

Another plus factor is the assembly of "economic" talent by Dr Mahathir to advise him on economic matters.

They include former finance minister Tun Daim Zainuddin, former Bank Negara Malaysia governor Tan Sri Dr Zeti Akhtar Aziz, prominent economist Professor Jomo Sundaram, and business magnate and investor Robert Kuok.

The other coalescing factors that must be addressed include the role of the monarchy and the need to deliver on Dr Mahathir's promise to hand over

power to his successor.

The latter, if left unattended, may disrupt the continuity of the state of politics and lead to the collapse of the present arrangement within the government.

As for the monarchy, the country has just installed a new king. Traditionally, the Malay rulers play a symbolic role with their privileges and rights enshrined in the Federal Constitution.

Lately, observers are of the view that the monarchy has been readying itself for an assertive position within the polity.

The new king has called on the people to refrain from causing

misunderstanding by raising matters that can undermine and destroy harmony. His Majesty states unity and harmony are the pillars and strengths of the nation. "I will put the people first, respect the old and honour the young," he vows.

Talk within public circles indicates that Dr Mahathir is not ready to pass on the leadership baton to his successor.

It is hoped that Dr Mahathir will provide a convincing answer to this key subject to clear the air soon with the people coalescing behind him.

DR AZHARI KARIM
Kuala Lumpur