

'No country can live in isolation'

Mark of distinction: Dr Mahathir receiving an Honorary Doctorate of Philosophy from Qatar University president Dr Hassan Al Derham in a ceremony held at the university's Ibn Khaldoun hall.
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PM: Important to work together to address issues

DOHA: Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said it is important for all countries to work together and learn from each other on issues that could affect the way they approach the world.

Speaking at the Doha Forum 2019 titled "Reimagining Governance in a Multipolar World" from Malaysia's perspective, the Prime Minister said no country could live in isolation, and in the case of Malaysia, it was seeking partners and friends, not alignments.

"We are at a point in history where countries will need to have relationships across a broad spectrum. We have to accept the fact that we neither live in a unipolar nor in a bipolar world," he said.

Among those present at the forum was the Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia considered its neighbours as friends and partners.

In South-East Asia, 10 countries decided to work as a group and the net result was stability and prosperity, he said.

As one of the founding fathers of Asean, he said, Malaysia continued to play a significant role in its regional integration.

He said Asean had maintained peace and stability within the region for the past 52 years.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was a friendly nation and wanted to be friends with everyone and enemy of none, with one obvious exception.

"Our population is too small to provide a good market. We need the global market. There is no provision in the UN (United Nations) that

allows one country to impose unilateral sanctions on another country.

"Malaysia and many others lost a big market when US sanctions were applied against Iran.

"Malaysia does not support the reimposition of the unilateral sanctions by the US against Iran. Such actions clearly violate the UN Charter and international laws. Sanctions can only be applied by the United Nations, in accordance with its Charter," he said.

Meanwhile, he said, trade wars were just like all wars – primitive and favoured the strong.

"It is the choice of bullies. It is unworthy of our claim to be concerned about human rights and values. The people who suffer the most are the poor people.

"Conflicts over trade will occur.

But their resolutions must be through negotiation, arbitration or through a court of law consented to by all countries concerned. In all conflicts there must be a willingness to give up something in order to get something," he said.

He also noted that climate change was another issue that was posing a grave threat.

Dr Mahathir said the global nature of this phenomenon required a concerted and coordinated global response.

"For Malaysia, we have already begun undertaking measures to reduce emissions and to deliver our part on the Nationally Determined Contributions. These are our efforts to prevent the devastating impacts that climate change may bring – not just for us but for our future generations," he added. — Bernama