

'Be loyal to govt of the day'

Put personal political stand aside, PM tells civil servants

By MAZWIN NIK ANIS
mazwin@thestar.com.my

PUTRAJAYA: It was a message that the Prime Minister could not have emphasised enough to civil servants: the need to be loyal to the government of the day and for them to reject corruption outright.

Their personal political stand aside, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said administrators must be neutral and serve the government that was formed through an election and must respect the people's choice of government.

"They must serve even if their political affiliation is not the same as the choice that the people have made.

"We must adhere to and respect the rakyat's choice. Politics aside, we are here to serve the people and the country," he said at a gathering with senior civil servants yesterday.

Also present was Chief Secretary to the Government Datuk Seri Dr Ismail Bakar.

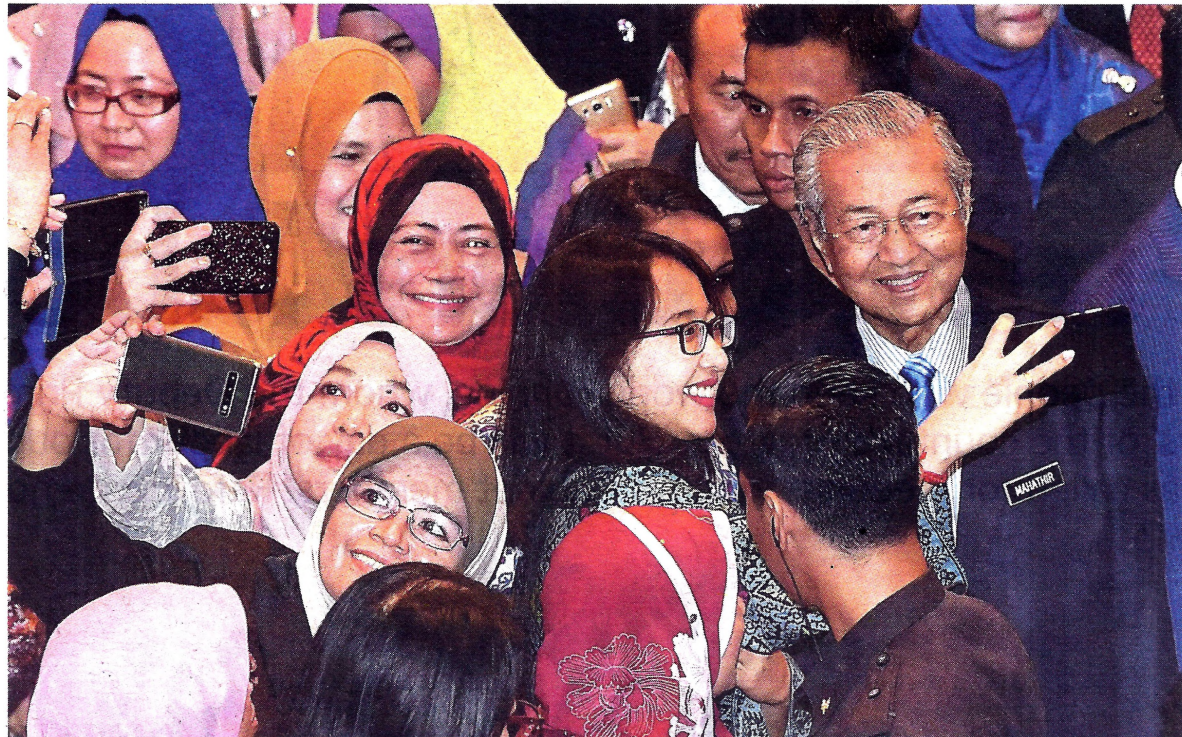
Dr Mahathir said that many Malaysians, including civil servants, did not expect a change in government and could not believe that it had happened on May 9 last year.

"Yes, it was shocking. It was not just the people who were shocked but those who won the election and were required to form the government were equally shocked."

The Prime Minister said Pakatan Harapan taking over the government had forced some civil servants - who had worked under the previous administration for years and had developed a sense of loyalty - to support and be loyal to the new government.

"Some think that this new government will not last, that we are here for just a term and the government which administrated for 61 years will return.

"Their loyalty is divided and they obviously cannot contribute to



Centre of attraction: Civil servants crowding around Dr Mahathir to take photographs with him after the gathering in Putrajaya. — Bernama

ensure this administration runs smoothly," he said.

Dr Mahathir acknowledged that it is not an easy task to gain civil servants' loyalty and support for the new government.

"But I am confident, if we can run the country well and fairly, this can be achieved. It is not just about serving the government but also the nation.

"We will be at the losing end if the country is not well governed," he added.

Sharing an anecdote with the audience, Dr Mahathir said when he was helming the country as the fourth prime minister, he had often wondered when the government would be defeated as almost all the parties that had helped their coun-

tries across the world gain independence were no longer ruling.

He cited several examples where political parties no longer existed, although they were the ones that fought for their countries' independence, adding that the people supported these parties because they shared a common aspiration.

"However, after gaining independence, these parties lost in elections because of abuse of power and corruption," he noted, adding that the Malaysian people had rejected the previous administration because of this as well.

On corruption, Dr Mahathir acknowledged that the Pakatan administration could also fall into kleptocracy if it is not cautious and does not continue to take measures

to prevent this.

However, he believed the tendency to abuse power among present administrators is not evident due to their strong stance and zero tolerance of corruption and power abuse, particularly among civil servants.

"We will continue to clean up the country of corruption as it will destroy the nation. I ask all government machinery to totally reject corruption.

"Don't take even one sen of corrupt money or even presents. I hope we can all make a pledge to stay away from corruption.

"If we want the country to progress and be respected, that is the stand that we should make," he said.