

Govt committed to making Malaysia graft-free

KUALA LUMPUR: The government is committed to rehabilitating Malaysia and liberating it from corruption and the abuse of power by strengthening its administration based on the Rule of Law and the Separation of Powers enshrined under the Federal Constitution, said the Prime Minister.

"I hope the country will be fully liberated from all forms of corruption so that a New Malaysia can be further developed, more than ever before," said Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said this in his congratulatory speech during the investiture ceremony of federal awards and honours in conjunction with the official birthday of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah at Istana Negara here yesterday.

Dr Mahathir also said that the government would always respect and defend the sovereignty of the institution of the constitutional monarchy, the position of Islam as the official religion, the special priv-

ileges of the Malays and bumiputras in Sabah and Sarawak, as well as the rights of other races as stated in the Constitution.

The government, he said, was aware of the economic uncertainty and the increasingly challenging global geopolitical system, including the many barriers to free trade, as well as global currency instability, which could affect the country.

Strategies at both national and international levels had been drawn up by the government in its bid to overcome the challenges, he added.

Dr Mahathir said the government's efforts to rehabilitate the country's financial position and economic performance as well as fulfil its promises to the people, has begun to bear fruit.

Various initiatives under the Shared Prosperity Vision 2030 had already been implemented to ensure that the nation's wealth could be distributed more broadly to stimulate economic growth and increase the people's income, he said.

Dr Mahathir said the 62nd

National Day celebration on Aug 31 with the theme "Sayangi Malaysiaku: Malaysia Bersih" had brought the unity and solidarity of the country's multiracial people into prominence.

This, he said, proved that Malaysians could come together and share a common value in a harmonious way, regardless of their race, background and beliefs.

"This is also a manifestation of Malaysian unity, which will be preserved and further strengthened. Needless to say, all development programmes and projects can only be successfully implemented if the country is peaceful and organised.

"The people are more mature now in facing threats to unity. The government, however, will continue to strengthen national unity and discharge its duties to preserve racial harmony," he said.

On the national development agenda, Dr Mahathir said the government would continue to engage the young and instil in them the spirit of volunteerism, entrepre-

neurship and good values so that they would be more productive and competitive in the face of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

The government, he promised, would continue to ensure that the environment be protected and not neglected in pursuit of modernisation.

"Those responsible for environmental pollution will face stern action and to prevent these from recurring, all quarters have been called upon to play a better role in protecting the environment," he said.

Dr Mahathir also congratulated Sultan Abdullah in conjunction with His Majesty's official birthday celebration.

"On behalf of the government and the people, I pledge to give our undivided loyalty to the King.

"May Allah bless His Majesty, as well as the Raja Permaisuri Agong and the whole royal family with His Taufik and Hidayah, long life, good health and lasting well being," he added. — Bernama