

Mahathir 'briefs' 136 youths on Look-East policy

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PETALING JAYA, Fri. — A hundred and thirty-six youths, who leave for industrial training in Japan next month, had a personal "briefing" on the Look-East policy from the Prime Minister today.

He told them that being technically efficient in their skills will not be enough to make them good workers on their return.

The Government's aim in sending them there, he said, is to have them come back not only with knowledge but with the spirit to serve and contribute to the development of the nation.

"Those selected to go must not only learn their culture, but their spirit of hard work, their work ethics and their discipline."

"They must not only think of how much they can earn when they come back," Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said.

The youths, recruited by the Public Services Department, are completing a six-month intensive course in the Japanese language at the Mara Institute of Technology here.

Different

The Prime Minister said the Government's decision to "look East" does not mean that "we have to take up all their ways of life and culture."

"Look East also means looking towards other countries — like Korea where the people are also very hard working and disciplined."

"It does not mean that looking West was wrong

... Don't forget that we achieved independence by looking to the West," he added.

The Prime Minister described how the country first began looking West and pinpointed where the people went wrong in learning from that part of the world.

He said it began way back during the days when the Portuguese and then the Dutch invaded Malacca and defeated the locals.

The defeat made the people realise there were weaknesses in their system and that the foreigners won because they were organised and decided to learn from them.

However, they adopted more the Westerners' ways and life style, rather than the ways they worked and studied.

The Japanese, however, were different. They looked to the West but only to copy their work methods, while on the home front they strengthened their cultural traditions.

He said the marriage between the Japanese spirit and the good work ethics enabled Japan to surge ahead of the others and take the lead today in economic development and production efficiency.

He told the youths that Malaysia too can succeed in achieving its goals if the people worked as hard and are as disciplined as the Japanese.

The Prime Minister also related personal experiences of his visit to Japan and a non-East country and the people's attitude in these countries.