

# PM: Ward off reliance on foreigners

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**KOTA BARU, Thurs.** — Malaysians should persevere and accept responsibility to reduce their dependence on foreign expertise, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He called on the people to self-appraise and self-criticise, and look back at the country's achievements and setbacks over the last 25 years.

"We have to assess our successes and failures since Independence and the reasons for our setbacks.

"We do not want foreigners to come to this country and do everything for us. If we allow this to happen, we will have problems," he said.

The Prime Minister was speaking at the opening of the fourth Kelantan Umno convention at the Kijang Camp, seven miles from here.

He told the gathering that if Malaysians were prepared to work harder, their position would be strengthened, allowing them to compete with others.

"I stress this need because after each convention or annual meeting, the authorities will receive a list of resolutions containing the people's requests but there never seems to be any personal resolution to take home. That is more important — the personal resolve for self-improvement," he said.

"Have we done everything that could possibly be done ourselves? The Government cannot fulfil all the wishes and demands of the people."

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir spoke of the situation before Independence which led to Malaysia being a multi-racial country.

He said one of the main factors was the refusal among Malays to do certain work, particularly in the mining and rubber industries.

He drew a parallel with the situation in the Middle East now, where most of the countries are relying on foreign expertise and workers.

"While we do not doubt that migrants who have lived here have proven their loyalty to this country, we continue to emphasise the

need for Malaysians to strive."

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir told Umno members to go through the proper channels when forwarding suggestions or making criticisms.

He said that though the party leadership is open to criticism, party members must consider their responsibilities.

"We do not want to provide the opposition parties with an issue to hit out at Umno. The opposition parties are bankrupt," he said.

In an obvious reference to Pas and its 18-year-rule in Kelantan before the Barisan Nasional's victory in the 1978 elections, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said: "Previously, they had the (financial) means by selling off timber and land but now they need to get the means from others."

The Prime Minister further said the future of the Malays would be bleak if they were apolitical and weak economically.

At the Kijang Camp, he was met by Finance Minister Tengku Razaleigh who is also the chairman of the Kelantan Umno liaison committee, and Menteri Besar Datuk Haji Mohamed Yaacob.