

# Youth programmes should infuse our identity'

# Let's think Malaysian:

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**KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. — Youth organisations must protect themselves from negative elements by infusing a Malaysian identity in their activities, the Prime Minister said today.**

He said youth should give greater regard to being Malaysian rather than place unnecessary importance on their regional or district identity.

Addressing a crowd of nearly 10,000 young people at the launching of the International Youth Year rally at the Stadium Negara here this afternoon, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said: "We should always think and identify ourselves as Malaysians as we participate in efforts to develop the nation.

"In this regard, youth programmes should be linked to the creation of a Malaysian identity so that the healthy development of youth organisations will not be marred by negative elements."

Representatives from 15 nations attended the rally hosted by Malaysia in conjunction with the International Youth Year. This year's theme is "Participation, Development and Peace."

## Values

Dr Mahathir said youth should continue to identify strategies and programmes aimed at building a strong and prosperous nation, besides increasing their involvement in other aspects of nation-building.

He said: "What is important is that youth should stress common (Malaysian) values such as respecting one another, love for the nation, friendship and peace.

"This requires involvement, a genuine desire and a great deal of sacrifice."

The Prime Minister described efforts to strengthen multi-racial unity and understanding as one of the greater challenges facing all Malaysians.

Such efforts could succeed if every Malaysian made a "sincere and determined" contribution towards the common objective, he said.

Dr Mahathir pointed out that Government policies such as the New Economic Policy (NEP), National Education Policy and the National Culture Policy were aimed at evolving a Malaysian identity.

In this respect, he urged youth, irrespective of their racial origin, to join forces and participate in common programmes.

He said it was a fact that members in some associations were mostly from one race although the membership was constitutionally open to all.

"We should encourage

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our youth to mix freely if we want to emphasise the spirit of brotherhood and understanding among the races," he added.

Dr Mahathir called on youth organisations to formulate "concrete and positive programmes" to foster greater racial unity.

Underlining the fact that about 76 per cent of Malaysians were under 35 years of age, he said: "It is important to systematically develop the potential of youth in the country so that we can reap maximum benefits in the nation-building process."

Youth leaders, he said, should be mature and capable of drawing the active participation of all members in their organisations.

They should always practise the Rukunegara so that national development could be carried out in a harmonious manner.

"Given the fact that the

rise or fall of a nation is dependent on its value system, Malaysian youth should practise positive values such as diligence, discipline, sincerity, honesty and cleanliness," he added.

On the dadah menace, he said greater effort should be aimed at preventing dadah abuse rather than on treatment and rehabilitation of addicts.

Dr Mahathir urged youth associations to encourage greater youth involvement in their activities and, thereby, prevent them from getting into the clutches of the dadah menace.

He also advised youth associations to be self-reliant and not depend too much on Government or public assistance.

"Youth activities should be based on their (financial) capabilities," he said.

The Prime Minister regretted that some associations were so over-dependent on donations that "they even solicited donations for their own entertainment."