

Youth told: Be agents of change

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By SABRY SHARIF

KUCHING, Thurs. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today urged youths to be agents of change to prepare the people for the challenges of a developed Malaysia.

He reminded Malaysians that although old practices "die hard" but "to continue with them to cope with the economic challenges of a developed Malaysia will result in Malaysians falling behind others."

In this respect, he urged youths to acquire new skills and expertise to enable them to change the people's attitude to such out-dated practices as well as meet their own preparations of economic challenges of a developed Malaysia.

"The Malay proverb of *kais pagi makan pagi, kais petang makan petang* is out-dated," he said when officially opening the Sarawak United National Youth Organisations (Saberkas) office-cum shopping complex, Wisma Saberkas, at Jalan Tun Abang Haji Openg near here.

The Prime Minister said twenty or more years ago, it was the practice of seeing the growth of small and medium-size shops which do not pose any challenges in terms of managerial and entrepreneurial capabilities.

Challenge

He said, but now, Kuching, which at one time was just a small town had grown in size and activity and with it came large shopping-cum-office blocks like Wisma Saberkas.

"In this context, the challenge to Sarawakians is their ability to not only manage such multi-storey buildings but also to exercise the necessary entrepreneurial skills that will ensure profits predicted in the feasibility study of such projects."

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the people, especially youths, must also better themselves to ensure maximum utilisation of economic resources and as agents of the change, spread this to others.

He cited the practice of shifting cultivation as an example of the under utilisation of an economic resource and "the hanging on to old habits."

He noticed that on his way to officially open the Batang Ai hydro-electric project in Sarawak's Second Division, large tracts of land had been abandoned by shifting cultivators.

He regretted that this was still going on as the people failed to realise that they were wasting centuries-old valuable timber and that the land was under-utilised.

He suggested that youths step up their activities to change the attitude of the people, especially encouraging them to learn new skills and ideas, to ensure maximum exploitation of their economic resources.