

# Dr M: Acquire skills to rid foreign 'control'

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By OUR REPORTER

MALAYSIA's fight for independence will be useless if it is allowed to be replaced with "neo-colonialism" which can happen through control of the economy, political ideology and culture.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in his message on the eve of Merdeka Day said the neo-colonialists need not depend on strength to conquer. Colonialism by way of culture, for example, can be achieved without resorting to military or monetary means.

Speaking over RTM last night, Dr Mahathir said signs of "neo-colonialism" was emerging in the modern world which had been made smaller by advanced communication.

He said the most effective way to counter this new phenomenon was through acquisition of skills and knowledge in all fields including religion.

"We can then direct our nationalistic spirit to acquire knowledge and various skills to safeguard our freedom, dignity and religious integrity, race and country," he added.

The Prime Minister hoped that one day Malaysians will be able to explore the ocean beds for petroleum and produce manufactured goods without outside assistance.

He reminded the younger generations that they had a responsibility to guard and preserve the country's independence through acquisition of knowledge, and help ensure that the period of living under foreign rule is not repeated.

Dr Mahathir said the people who had experienced hard times under colonial rule are dimin-

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ishing by the year. More than Malaysia's 15 million people are under 30 years and had not witnessed the fight against British rule and as such may not fully appreciate independence.

Dr Mahathir said the national spirit which brought about independence in the past had its positive elements like unity. It was unity that had helped in the fight against the Malayan Union, the British rule in the peninsula, Sabah and Sarawak and the communist threat in 1960, he said.

As such, it was appropriate that the theme for this year's National Day celebrations be *Nasionalisme Teras Perpaduan* or nationalism as the basis of unity.