

PM: Need for sacrifice and discipline

# Hone your skills, teachers advised

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**KUALA LUMPUR, Fri.** Teachers should develop teaching skills that will endear them to their pupils, **Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad** said, adding that this will make their job of imparting knowledge more effective.

The Prime Minister said teachers knew the qualities which they must possess in order to be effective and should strive to develop them all the time.

"Although training institutions provide formal teaching methods, there are some teachers who stand out and are loved by their students. This made their work easier and more effective."

He said there were also teachers who were less respected by their pupils. Such teachers should learn to improve their skills and use them fully.

Dr Mahathir was speaking at the launching of Teachers' Day 1990 celebrations at the Putra World Trade Centre.

He said acquiring the right teaching skills called for sacrifice and discipline. In the course of their work, teachers sometimes had to disregard personal problems in order to impart knowledge to their pupils.

He said pupils were sensitive to their teachers' feelings, attitudes and influence. Their concentration on studies might be adversely affected if their teachers were disturbed or distracted.

"That is why teachers have to eliminate all other factors which may distract them from their vocation. This is not easy to achieve, but those with the discipline and strong personality can develop their skills to high levels."

The Prime Minister recalled that he personally was the result of the combined tutelage of his teachers, parents, brothers

**ON PAGE 2:**

- THE TOKOH GURU WINNERS
- ANWAR: GEAR UP FOR CHANGES

and sisters. In this regard, he felt that the influence his teachers had on him equalled, if not exceeded, that of his parents and family.

He was confident that all teachers realised the significance of their contribution. But there were some sectors of society, he said, who regarded the pursuit of paper qualifications as the ultimate quest in education.

They did not see the relevance of getting additional education in personal development. Therefore, the time had come for the country to identify its priorities,

Dr Mahathir said, adding that the country also needed to emphasise spiritual education.

If society could accept these priorities, believing that a person's spiritual well being was just as important as his academic success, then teachers should be given the role to disseminate these good values to the younger generation, he said.

The Prime Minister reminded teachers to promote an education system that would meet the needs of a competitive society.

"We cannot run away from having to compete."

"Individuals compete among themselves, as do groups with one another. Communities also compete with one another while nations try to outdo each other in various pursuits."

"Therefore, an education system which does not take this competitive atmosphere into account will have negative implications."

Speaking to newsmen later, the Prime Minister said he regretted the attitude of some educated people. These people, after having been given important positions in society, failed to live up to expectation.

Some were given positions in banks and companies but had used their position to cheat, he said.