

THE NINE CHALLENGES

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PM outlines the big 9 that must be overcome

By Wong Chun Wai

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has outlined nine challenges that have to be overcome for Malaysia to be a developed nation by the year 2020.

And he said the most fundamental and basic of the challenges was the formation of a united Malaysian nation with a sense of common and shared destiny.

The Prime Minister said this must be a country that was "ethnically integrated, living in harmony with full and fair partnership, made up of one *Bangsa Malaysia*, with political loyalty and dedication to the nation."

Comprehensive development towards a developed society could not merely mean material and economic advancement, he added.

The second challenge is, the

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creation of a psychologically liberated, secure, and developed Malaysian society with faith and confidence in itself.

“The third challenge we have always faced is that of fostering and developing a mature democratic society, practising a form of mature consensual, community-oriented Malaysian democracy that can be a model for many developing countries,” Dr Mahathir said in his working paper, *Malaysia: The Way Forward*.

The paper was presented at the inaugural meeting of the Malaysian Business Council which Dr Mahathir chaired yesterday.

The Malaysian Institute of Strategic and International Studies released the paper to the

press today (See Pages 14 and 15).

The Prime Minister said the fourth challenge was establishing a fully moral and ethical society, whose citizens were strong in religious and spiritual values and imbued with the highest of ethical standards.

“The fifth challenge that we have always faced is the challenge of establishing a matured, liberal and tolerant society, a society that is innovative and forward-looking,” he said.

Sixth is to be not only a consumer of technology but also a contributor to the scientific and technological civilization.

Seventh is the formation of a fully caring society and a caring

culture.

Dr Mahathir envisaged a social system in which society would come before self, in which the welfare of the people would revolve not around the state or the individual but around a strong and resilient family system.

The eighth challenge is to ensure an economically-just society with a fair and equitable distribution of the wealth of the nation, in which there is full partnership in economic progress.

“Such a society cannot be in place so long as there is the identification of race with economic function, and the identification of economic backwardness with race,” he said.

Dr Mahathir said the final challenge was establishing a prosperous society, with an economy that was fully competitive, dynamic, robust and resilient.

He said economic development “must not become the be-all and the end-all of our national endeavours.”

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All must be moved above poverty line, says PM

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developed Malaysia until we have finally overcome the nine challenges that have confronted us from the moment of our birth as an independent nation," he added.

"There can be no fully developed Malaysia until we have finally overcome the nine challenges that have confronted us from the moment of our birth as an independent nation," he added.

The Prime Minister also spoke on the need to eradicate poverty, regardless of race and locations, and to move all Malaysians above the line of absolute poverty.

He said the people must be provided essential shelter, access to health facilities and all the basic amenities.

"A developed Malaysia must have a wide and vigorous middle class and must provide full opportunities for those in the bottom third to climb their way out of the pit of relative poverty," he said.

On the removal of race identification with economic function, he said some affirmative actions must be taken if the people wanted to build an equitable society.

"This will mean that in all major and important sectors of employment, there should be a good mix of the ethnic groups that make up the Malaysian nation.

"By legitimate means we must ensure a fair balance with regard to professionals and all the major categories of employment.

"Certainly, we must be as interested in quality and merit," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the healthy development of a viable and robust bumiputera commercial and industrial community must be ensured.

He said a developed Malaysia should not have a society in which economic backwardness was identified with race.