

Dr M: How we can be a world power

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By Syed Nadzri

MALACCA, Fri. — The Prime Minister has expressed confidence that Malaysia will become a world power in 30 years, provided the people are determined enough and are not easily distracted by petty issues.

There was no reason why the country could not emulate certain other nations in achieving great strides within 30 years, he added.

"If they can do it, so can we if we have enough confidence in our own abilities," Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said at a National Youth Day rally at Kubu Stadium here this morning.

He also launched a master plan for the implementation of the National Youth Policy at the rally, which was attended by about 10,000 youths from all over the country.

Also present were Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Thamby Chik and

Youth and Sports Minister Senator Haji Annuar Musa.

The Prime Minister, touching significantly on his vision for a developed Malaysia by the year 2020, said 30 years was a long period in a human lifetime, but a brief spell in a country's history.

"There is a lot we can do in 30 years. Maybe we think we cannot match some other countries but we are not inferior," he said and asked the people not to let petty issues hamper development.

"The problem is that we sometimes get distracted by small issues which take up a lot of our time and energy. Let's instead devote the time and energy to develop the country."

Dr Mahathir said the country's multiracial character should never be an obstacle to development.

"We can be united despite the diversity, so let us use the strength of our unity to

build the country. We should minimise our differences and emphasise our similarities."

Dr Mahathir said the national youth master plan, which provides guidelines spelling out the thrust of youth development in the country, should serve as a strong foundation for vision 2020.

"It is the youth of today, who will benefit from vision 2020. But a development programme will remain just that, without the right commitment.

"Implementation is important and this depends on the confidence we have in ourselves and on the proper planning of our strategies," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia had all sorts of development programmes and not all were perfect and ideal.

"The important thing is for us to evaluate them and correct weaknesses that surface."