

# Value your citizenship, Dr M tells Malaysians

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PETALING JAYA, Tues. — Many foreigners want to become Malaysian citizens because they believe that such citizenship offers significant privileges and benefits, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Therefore, the people should keep their identity cards safely because many foreigners wanted to obtain them by any means, the Prime Minister said when he launched the nation's new identity card which has extra security features at the National Registration Department headquarters.

He said the Malaysian citizenship was not given free of charge. The price for it was loyalty and responsibility to the country, he added.

However, some Malaysians who were too westernised in their outlook believed that citizenship had nothing to do with loyalty to the country, he said.

"These people do not mind being tools of foreigners with bad intentions towards us. They receive mon-

ey from foreigners to sabotage their own country."

Dr Mahathir said the new identity card was part of the first phase in the computerisation programme undertaken by the department.

The second phase, to begin next year, will involve a system to collect population data for a data base to enable the Government to effectively plan programmes and resolve national problems.

The data base can be used by all relevant Government departments. The system will also be the basis for the national population register which is important in public administration.

Dr Mahathir said there were numerous benefits from the new identity card project even though it cost \$64 million to implement.

He said the identity card system was essential as it helped differentiate between citizens and illegal immigrants.

Dr Mahathir said many foreigners were interested

in working here in view of the numerous job and business opportunities available.

"But migration from one nation to another has become a problem to many nations which are more developed than their neighbours. This problem must be arrested if the rights and interests of citizens are to be protected."

The new identity card had many security characteristics to prevent forgery, he said, adding that the public should not cause problems on the new ICs just because getting one may involve some expenses.

Asked to elaborate his earlier references to Malaysians who were used as tools by foreigners, Dr Mahathir said the Government was disappointed with them but it could not take back their citizenship unless they exercised the rights of citizenship of other countries such as taking part in their elections.

"I just hope that the Malaysian public will realise

that their citizenship is a privilege which many foreigners want."

Dr Mahathir, who is also Home Minister, received the first new identity card, followed by his Deputy, Datuk Megat Junid Megat Ayub, and Parliamentary Secretary Ong Ka Ting.

Asked how serious the problem of disloyal Malaysians was, Dr Mahathir said it was not serious but it was a problem anyway.

He declined to identify who these people were.

Asked about the form of aid they were receiving from outsiders, he said: "We find they have much money and we are surprised how they had got it."

On the recent demonstration in the country by so-called foreign environmentalists against logging, he said they were hypocrites because they came from countries which talked often about the rule of law, yet had come to break the laws of this country.

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