

NATIONAL DAY ADDRESS

Strive to sustain growth, says PM

By **AHIRUDIN ATTAN**

MALAYSIANS, celebrating their 34th National Day today, have been urged to strengthen their unity and strive to sustain the country's economic growth in forging ahead towards making the 2020 vision a reality.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, in his televised National Day address last night, said with unity and sustained growth, there should be no reason why Malaysia cannot attain the objective of becoming a developed nation by the year 2020.

Stressing the importance of unity, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said it is essential that the principles of tolerance and cooperation be practised and enhanced.

Situations that could threaten the nation's unity and peace must be avoided. Unity must be based on the understanding within and among the various communities as well as the creation of a caring society. Unity also means upholding collectively and whole-heartedly the concept of democracy in facing future challenges.



“What is important is for us to put the interest of the nation above self,” he said, adding that this, in the long run, will benefit the individuals.

He also urged everyone — from community and government leaders, executives and private sector workers to government officers and employees, businessmen and the ordinary rakyat — to work very hard to sustain and enhance the nation's economic growth.

“We can't afford to rest on our laurels as our achievements in economic growth need to be sustained and improved further if we aspire to become a developed

nation by the year 2020,” he said.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the main foundation towards attaining the objectives of the Vision 2020 has been laid with the inception of the Sixth Malaysia Plan and the National Development Policy.

He said, however, while much has been said about Vision 2020, many Malaysians still have not grasped its objectives. Many still think the vision aims for Malaysia to become an industrialised nation with per capita exceeding **US\$10,000** by the year 2020.

“It is, therefore, fitting to have Vision 2020 as the theme for this year's National Day celebration. With this theme, the rakyat will be told of the nation's **future** direction and goals, what is meant by being developed in the Malaysian context and how this objective can be achieved,” he said.

“**Industrialisation** and income levels are, no doubt, yardsticks of a developed nation but Vision 2020 also seeks to develop an educated society with positive norms and values, caring and tolerant, who value and preserve

the environment and who believe in religion.

“The belief that **sufferings** in this life would bring **happiness** in the hereafter, **and otherwise**, is misplaced. A **balance** between the two is integral in our vision of a developed nation,” he added.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said as they celebrate Merdeka, Malaysians should be thankful that with the freedom and economic strength that the country has achieved, they can choose and determine the direction, the form and the pace of development for themselves and for the generations to come.

Independence, he added, does not guarantee prosperity as many nations that achieved their independence after the Second World War are now facing instability and socio-economic failures. The people, particularly the post-Merdeka children who did not have to put up with the shame and sufferings of a nation and race **colonised**, must be continuously reminded of this fact so that they accord the highest value to their independence.