

PM: Don't lose our own good values

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By Ahmad A. Talib

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. — The Prime Minister wants to see a successful Malaysia with a balanced material and spiritual development without losing our own good values.

This will release us from over-dependence on the skills, knowledge and wealth of the developed countries, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said in his New Year message over RTM tonight.

He said: "For as long as we are without the knowledge and the expertise that are currently available, for so long will our independence be compromised and we will be forced to submit to foreign powers.

"To formulate an objective or a vision is easy. Anybody can dream of a grand vision. But between an aspiration or vision and the ability to attain it there are wide chasms and huge obstacles.

"The question that we must ask is whether Malaysia, with its multi-racial people, will be able to continuously develop the nation for the next 30 years in order to achieve developed country status, as envisioned?"

Dr Mahathir said that in 1991, a number of important policies were introduced. These include Vision 2020, the National Development Plan (NDP) and the Sixth Malaysia Plan (RM6), all of which were meant to identi-

fy a single target for all the people to strive for.

He said the country's record in its 34 years of independence showed that the country is capable of sustaining its development. Improving the nation's GNP per capita from \$775 in 1957 to \$6,781 in that period suggests that it is not impossible to achieve targets set under Vision 2020, he said.

"But this does not mean that Vision 2020 objectives can be achieved with our normal efforts. Many factors will affect our performance, including the state of the world markets, domestic and foreign politics, sophistication of knowledge, keen competition in the international markets and barriers imposed by the developed countries.

"Development does not occur as a matter of course. Policy directions as well as concerted efforts are crucial."

In this regard, Dr Mahathir said everyone must appreciate the importance of practising values and approaches compatible with the achievement of success. The success of an individual or race is dependent on the character of the individual or race. If they are not industrious, lack foresight, insincere, indisciplined and unethical, they will invariably fail.

He said: "It is for this reason that there are nations which were backward before but now have become

developed; and likewise there are nations which were once developed but which have now become decadent.

"If we analyse these phenomena carefully we will find that the advancement or decadence of a nation is the result of the citizens' ethics and values. When a developed nation drops its good ethical values, it will inevitably regress.

"On the other hand, when good ethical values are imbibed by the citizens of backward nations, in a short space of time they will emerge as developed countries. This is true also for races or individuals."

The Prime Minister said 30 years is not a long time but many of us will not be around by the year 2020. Therefore what is being planned is for the future generations.

However, this does not mean that those unable to reap the fruits of development in 2020 should not work hard in order to achieve this objective. One of the noblest characteristics of man is to put national interest above personal interest.

On Jan 1, 1992, all Malaysians should make a resolution to succeed in the tasks entrusted to them so that the nation's performance in the second year of Vision 2020 would continue to improve, Dr Mahathir said.

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six million and its GNP per capita was \$775. After 34 years of independence, the population grew to 18 million while its GNP per capita jumped to \$6,781.

He said to achieve Vision 2020, Malaysia must increase the present per capita income by about eight times within the next 30 years.

"If our record is anything to go by, it is not impossible to achieve this objective," he added.

However, he cautioned this did not mean that Vision 2020 objectives could be achieved with normal efforts.

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"Hence, we must appreciate the importance of practising values and approaches compatible with the achievement of success.

"The success of an individual or a race is dependent on the character of the individual or race. If they are not industrious, lack foresight, are insincere, indisciplined and unethical, they will invariably fail."

Dr Mahathir said it was for this reason why some nations which were backward before but had now become developed and likewise there were nations which were once developed but had now become decadent.

The Prime Minister also noted that while work ethics could ensure the success of a nation, peace and security played an important role also.

He said one must accept that even in a homogeneous society, a 100 per cent consensus on any matter was not possible as invariably, some would be dissatisfied with the demands of others.

"Misunderstandings are therefore inevitable. This is especially true in a multi-racial country like Malaysia," he noted.

"If there is rationality and a sense of responsibility on the part of all, difference of opinion will not result in breaches of the peace.

"Instead, there will be a willingness to compromise and this will result in harmony in the country.

"These characteristics are found among Malaysians and they need to be further instilled."

Dr Mahathir said the Government's open attitude would be maintained but the Government would not forget its responsibilities.

He said foreigners had no right to determine what was good for this country. Only Malaysian citizens had this right and they could express their opinion in an orderly manner, through the electoral process as provided in the Constitution.