

Dr M: Strong moral values key to progress

By Ahmad A. Talib

TAPAH, Thurs. — Malaysians should strive to maintain their strong traditional moral values as the nation marches towards developed nation status by the year 2020, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today. He said there must not be an erosion of moral values among the people as everyone garnered their efforts towards progress.

The Prime Minister said this when he launched the *Kampungku* programme for Perak here.

He was accompanied by Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat, Primary Industries Minister Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik, Menteri Besar Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib and other

State dignitaries.

Dr Mahathir said as the nation moved towards greater industrialisation, rural to urban migration would continue.

For this reason, there must be strong resilience against possible deterioration of values as found in the kampungs.

"We are 27 years away from achieving the target of Vision 2020 but we must be prepared to defend our values right from now," Dr Mahathir said.

He said as industrialisation became more pronounced, there would be pressure on the people's values and these values must be retained if industrialisation was to be a significant contributor to national development.

"The neighbourhood atmosphere and characteristic found in kampungs must be maintained. This is one of the strongest points which has made villages progress without suffering losses in their values. The spirit of co-operation and *gotong-royong* must be promoted because these would make our society more resilient," Dr Mahathir said.

On the other hand, in the urban centres, many people did not even know their neighbours, preferring to live in isolation. Sometimes, nobody seemed to care what was happening to their neighbours, he added.

The people must learn to blend traditional values with modern and progressive thinking as the nation marched towards Vision

2020.

"The nation would not like to see our society losing their moral values, as seen in some developed nations. Moral decadence must be checked and in its place efforts must be made to strengthen family ties and the strong sense of neighbourliness."

Dr Mahathir said striving for money was all right but this must be accompanied by an equally strong sense of responsibility.

The Prime Minister was confident that the country could further develop if the people acquired the skills and know-how to do so. He said Malaysians must be competitive because everyone else was also moving towards greater economic achievement.

Dr Mahathir said the nation had proven its ability to move into sophisticated industries. In the past, not many people would have given us credit but this had since changed.

He added that kampungs might be replaced in the future as the country became fully developed. It would not be impossible that one day there would be a kampung museum to show the future generation what the kampung really looked like.

Later, the Prime Minister declared opened the caravan park at Kuala Woh, about 10km from here. The park offers picnickers an opportunity to rest in their caravans at the popular picnic spot.

Dr Mahathir then visited an Orang Asli kampung.

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