

Meet challenges head-on, Dr Mahathir tells youths

By Ahmad A. Talib and Hisham Mahzan

KOTA BARU, Mon. — Youths should not shy away from problems and challenges but should instead meet them squarely and seek the best possible ways to overcome them, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said challenges would not vanish by wishing them away. They could only be overcome through hard work, determination and creative thinking.

If youths develop a liking to solve problems instead of sweeping them under the carpet, then the targets set by the nation under Vision 2020 have a better chance of being realised, he said.

Dr Mahathir gave this advice to youths at the National Youth Assembly held at Komplek Sekolah-Sekolah

Wakaf Mer Zainab here. He was accompanied by Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Annuar Musa, Malaysian Youth Council president Fuad Datuk Hassan and other national youth leaders.

"Nation-building is a continuous process. Today's leaders are laying the foundation for future leaders to take over. Since today's youths are going to shoulder the responsibility of managing the nation in the future, they must start preparing their minds from now," said Dr Mahathir.

"Their hard work must be accompanied by positive attitudinal changes. This means that they should not moan and groan when confronting work pressure. Everyone has problems. But the test is whether one can solve these problems without loss in confidence.

"To meet these challenges, youths must acquire skills and knowledge. To be

achievers, youths must not only acquire the appropriate academic knowledge but must be able to manage their resources well, absorb knowledge in as many areas as possible and build up their confidence."

Youth leaders have several responsibilities, all of which must be discharged with the best of intentions and abilities, the Prime Minister said. He added that they should improve self-discipline and exercise restraint when necessary.

Schoolchildren, he said, should know that they have their duties as well. The more educated they are, the better their chances of administering the country well.

"Others have told us that we have the ability to become a developed nation. And yet some of our people doubt this ability. This is a question of self-confidence. Confidence can be acquired,

but it would partly depend on the individual's willingness to nurture it.

"Youths have a lot of problems to solve, and this exercise can be executed effectively if there is sufficient confidence. Youths should realise that their experiences in problem-solving will be useful when they take over the reins of national administration."

The Prime Minister said the country achieved independence through the dedication shown by previous leaders in the struggle against the colonisers. But political independence is not total independence.

The nation must also be independent economically. Merdeka has less significance if the nation continues to depend on others for their livelihood. The nation cannot claim to be fully

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Dr M: Let's strive

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independent if this is not filled with substance, socially or economically.

There are many independent nations in the world but they still depend on other countries for aid and other forms of assistance.

That is why I'm stressing to our youths that they

should strive to meet present and future challenges. If they are willing to venture into all fields, then our independence will have a far greater meaning," the Prime Minister said.

He said that if youths were reluctant to shoulder their increasing responsibilities, then independence would have lesser meaning.