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SELECTED ETHICAL VALUES MUST BE PROPAGATED IN VISION 2020, SAYS PM
(Embargo: For Release/at 2230hrs, July 28)

KUALA LUMPUR, July 28 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight ethics must be studied, taught and propagated if Malaysia wants to prosper.

"And nowhere must it be propagated more than among those concerned with spearheading the country's development -- the executives, in the government and in the private sector," he said.

He said what was needed was a set of values made up of all the universally accepted virtues such as diligence, honesty, reasonable patience, discipline, determination, dedication, grit, concentration, attention to details and so forth.

"There are so many of these that it is impossible for anyone to have them all. Fortunately, it is possible for an individual or a whole nation to succeed reasonably well without having to have and to practise all the ethical virtues," he said.

He said this when addressing the Harvard Club at its dinner, here. The club held its annual meeting earlier today. -- more

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He said ethical values must be propagated, and selectively propagated, among certain critical groups which were expected to play a major role in the development of the nation.

The managers, executives and the professionals constituted one such group, he added.

He said ethical values were very complex and could not be left to "natural processes" for their propagation in society.

The prime minister said there was a tendency to focus on one simple quality or ethical value which would ensure the desired results.

Unfortunately one single quality could not ensure good results, no matter how universally the quality was regarded by the society as a whole.

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Dr Mahathir also said the problems faced by many developed nations today were in part due to the decline of ethical and moral values in their societies.

He also believed that one of the causes of massive commercial crimes in some developed societies was the total breakdown of religious faith.

He said there could be no doubt that the practice of good ethics could reduce the chances of failure both in the short and long term.

"We know of nations where corruption is rife. We know of nations where nothing moves. We know of nations where nothing is predictable. Of course there are nations with high morality which have also failed.

"But, history has proven that by and large ethical and moral values have a positive contribution to make towards the success of peoples, nations and even empires.

"We cannot do ourselves any harm if we, you and I and the other decision-makers in this country, were to appreciate the role of ethics and morality, and to practise them in the course of our daily struggle for a better Malaysia," he added. -- more

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However, professing religious faith alone was generally not enough even for the pious. "What we see of a person is often not what he is. And so we must propagate the practice of good ethics, not just because it is good for society but because it is good for the practitioner," he said.

The prime minister said what was good for the society was often good for the individual but the "selfish good" of one person was seldom durable.

"But the good of the community is more permanent, even for the individual," he added.

Dr Mahathir also said that ethics were hardly ever taught as a regular subject whether in schools or universities.

"It is assumed that everyone knows what constitutes good ethics and everyone will accept them unquestioningly," he added.

He said it was important that society did not just focus on ethical values, but more importantly, it should scrutinise the practice of these values, which should then be followed by corrective measures. -- Bernama

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