

PM: Invent new ideas, approaches to progress

By K.P. Waran

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — Malaysians must keep coming up with new ideas and approaches in all their endeavours and continue to gather knowledge at all times for the country to progress and meet its future challenges, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight.

He said Malaysia's high growth rate and its successful implementation of many of its programmes to improve the livelihood of the people can be attributed to such new ideas and approaches.

"When we implemented some of these approaches, there were some quarters which questioned it, but following our success in the implementation of the programmes, there are many countries which want to follow our footsteps," he said.

Speaking at a dinner organised by the Alumni of Maktab Rendah Sains Mara students, Dr Mahathir cited as an example the Malaysia Incorporated concept where the Government decided that there should be closer co-operation between the public and corporate sectors.

educational opportunities are available to everyone and we can draw up and implement programmes to benefit the people.

"Those who benefited from these educational and other programmes should also remember to repay the debt to their race, society and the country by helping other people, especially the younger generation," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysians should be thankful that the country's past leaders had a vision to develop the country and implement programmes to benefit the population.

He said in some countries, upon attaining independence, their leaders were more interested in "carrying out activities for themselves" and "fighting for power" instead of taking care of the population, which resulted in chaos and poverty.

He said gaining "independence" was not merely getting a signature on a document to enable the people to govern and administer themselves, but it meant the people had to become educated, self-reliant, progressive and able to stand tall among the people of other

He said the idea was criticised by many who felt the two sectors should not get too close.

"There is no reason why the Government and the private sector should be at loggerheads at all times, especially since this will not benefit anyone.

"On the other hand, if the Government could assist the private sector in its success, it will be able to fill its coffers by taxing the companies which had benefited from its policies.

"A healthy private sector means more money for those working in these companies and at the same time more money for the Government through taxation," he said.

He also urged Malaysians to continue their quest for knowledge and education and added that this should not stop as the world was becoming increasingly competitive and there was a need to keep pace with the developments in all fields.

He said education would also ensure that the people would be able to chart their own future and contribute to the future directions of their race, society and the nation.

He said before independence very few Malaysians were given educational opportunities, which resulted in them having to depend on the colonial masters to administer the country and the majority of the population being unable to make a decision on their future and that of their children.

"The situation is different now with the Government's policies to ensure that edu-

nations.

The dinner was attended by 1,300 ex-students of Maktab Rendah Sains Mara. Others present include Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Deputy Public Enterprises Minister Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman and Mara chairman Datuk Nazri Abdul Aziz.

Dr Mahathir also replied to questions posed by some of the ex-students.

When asked by an ex-student to describe the political scenario that would prevail in Malaysia in the year 2020 and whether the Malays would continue to be given special privileges, Dr Mahathir replied that would depend on the leaders and the people of that era.

"If we are confident that we can compete with the other races on our own then we do not need special privileges. I am confident that through our own ability, resilience and hardwork we can compete on an equal footing with the other races.

"We do not want to become overly dependent on laws and policies to ensure that we are a progressive race and instead be self-reliant and be able to take care of ourselves, the society and the country. In 2020 the decision on how we want to progress would be made by us," he said.

Earlier, the president of the Alumni, Mukhriz Mahathir, in his speech said it aimed to contribute towards achieving the nation's needs in Vision 2020 and had planned various activities to strengthen the integrity and fellowship of its members to serve society better.