

Dr M: Help country achieve greater heights

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SHAH ALAM, Sat. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad wants Malaysians to make an impact with their lives by making lasting contributions to take the country to greater heights and earn the respect of countries from all over the world.

The Prime Minister said independence would be meaningless without such an impact.

He said that as respectable people, Malaysians must strive to leave such an impact.

"A nation which does not work towards improving its status and lives will be disrespected and disregarded by others," he said when launching the *Rakan Muda Rekreasi* (Recreation) and *Rakan Muda Cinta Alam* (Nature Lovers) programmes at the Bukit Cahaya Seri Alam Agriculture Park here today.

About 6,830 youths representing youth organisations, recreational clubs and nature societies attended the launching — the highlight of a four-day camping which began on Wednesday.

Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, Agriculture Minister Datuk Seri Sanusi Junid, Youth and Sports Minister Ghani Othman and Selangor Menteri Besar Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib were among those present.

Dr Mahathir wanted Malaysians to be respected not because they existed or they asked for it, but "respected because of our achievements".

He said if they had no capabilities and did not achieve anything, they would never be respected by others.



"Do we want to be disrespected?" he asked the crowd, which gave an emphatic "no" for an answer.

The Prime Minister said Malaysians should be confident that they could help the country achieve greater heights.

"There have been cases of countries which were once undeveloped, but have succeeded. We believe we can (do likewise)," he said to the applause of the crowd.

"We should always have the conviction to do whatever we set out to do, including climbing Mount Everest, sailing across the Pacific Ocean and exploring the Arctic and Antarctic regions."

Dr Mahathir reminded the *Rakan Muda* participants that they would be the country's future leaders and therefore should not only work for short-term success but should make the country competitive all the time.

"As respectable human beings, we should make an impact before leaving this world, unlike animals which die without leaving behind any history."

He said not everybody could become a professor or fighter pilot, but certainly one could contribute in other ways.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysians must be determined to make it a point to achieve excellence in whatever they

did, and to reach this level they needed noble values such as discipline, trustworthiness, commitment and diligence. Without noble values, it would be impossible to succeed.

He spoke on the importance of inculcating noble values among the *Rakan Muda* participants who had to shoulder the responsibility of developing the country in the future.

"The responsibility (of developing the country) does not end with one generation only. It must continue."

He said the *Rakan Muda* programmes were to help the youths acquire noble values and determine the country's direction.

Rakan Muda, launched by Dr Mahathir on Oct 29, offers participants a healthy way to spend their leisure hours.

The Prime Minister said the Government would continue to help make the *Rakan Muda* programmes a success, but the participants should not be dependent.

"The best results are from our own efforts."

He also advised them to help the Government and other relevant authorities to maintain the country's healthy environment.

A heavy downpour did not deter the large crowd of youths who converged on the park for the occasion.

The handing over of two flags depicting the "Friends of Recreation" and "Friends of the Environment" logos to Dr Mahathir marked the launch of the programmes. The flags were handed over to Dr Mahathir by representatives of the National Recreation Association and Youth Department, Shaharuddin Yusof and Aziz Shaarie respectively.

Dr Mahathir and other dignitaries later sportingly joined the participants in singing the lively *Rakan Muda* song.

Various activities under the two programmes were also organised at the park, including mountain bike racing, a hot air balloon show, street soccer and a chess competition.

Abdul Ghani later told reporters that the Government was confident that *Rakan Muda* programmes would become a way of life among youths in the country in two or three years.

"The Prime Minister has set a target that in time, Malaysian youths must be able to conquer Mount Everest. To do that, the ministry is in the process of identifying suitable participants who will be trained to achieve the feat," he said.

He said to date, about 500,000 youths have already signed up with the *Rakan Muda* programme throughout the country.

Earlier, Muhammad in his speech urged youths to be more sensitive towards their surroundings by helping the Government to prevent destruction of the environment.

He said youths could play their part as the eyes and ears of the authorities by reporting activities that were detrimental to the environment, including the dumping of toxic waste by irresponsible parties.