

Students, experts, academicians must

Be adventurous,

be ready to be challenged

urges PM

By Vijayan Menon

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — Malaysian students, experts and academicians should be more adventurous in their pursuits as the country seeks to produce world class intellectuals, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said many Malaysians took the easy attitude and were pampered which led to the loss of dynamism and adventurousism.

"All this has to change. We should mentally prepare ourselves to scale the tallest mountain, explore the deepest ocean and attempt fields, however, alien they may be.

"I don't know where this spirit of adventure has gone to. Malays have crossed the seas and subjugated foreign lands. Immigrants from China and India would not have come here if not for their courage and spirit of adventure then."

Possibly, the Prime Minister said, the country's wealth and prosperity had led the people to become contented with what they have.

He said Malaysians did not have to contend with wars, famine and poverty as some other communities in the world had to.

Dr Mahathir said the spirit of adventurousism in the field of knowledge should mean one's readiness to be tested and challenged.

"We cannot claim ourselves to be a knowledgeable person or expert if we are not tested at the highest level or internationally," he said when launching the *Prime Minister of Malaysia Fellowship Exchange Programme* at the Putra World Trade Centre here tonight.

The programme is specially created to raise the standard of education of local students and intellectuals to the level of excellence. Priority is given to students pursuing their master's degree or doctorate of philosophy.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia wanted to create world class intellectuals and experts.

"Similarly, we hope the country will have experts who are able to carry out works which are of global standard."

Dr Mahathir said Malay-

sians lacked proper exposure and as such students and experts should be exposed to the world.

"They should interact in an atmosphere of professionalism and respect for one another. As long as we cannot stand on par with international experts and professionals, we will not be able to interact with them on an even footing or be respected."

Dr Mahathir said the programme was a special one as it did not only take into consideration the nation's future but also valued the contributions of past veterans and leaders.

"The programme honours all the nation's Prime Ministers who have contributed in various ways to enable the country to become what it is today."

Dr Mahathir said the programme would also help to ensure the continuity of the national Education Policy, adding that it played a complementary and supportive role.

Dr Mahathir said everyone knew that education was the foundation of the excellence of a race and this was why the fellowship programme's theme was *excellence*.

"This means we have to plan our strategies and implement our work with an exemplary attitude towards excellence."

He said there were many wholesome values which could benefit the people.

"However, sometimes what we copy from the West is in reality a value which was already existing in the eastern civilisation.

Dr Mahathir said without proper education and training it was difficult to boost one's ability and efficiency.

He added the fellowship programme served as an extension to existing programmes and its board of trustees would oversee and assist students and intellectuals to continue to progress without any hitches.

"Its basis is the love for knowledge through education. The board will offer scholarships and other financial assistance to outstanding Malaysians who possess the willingness to improve themselves, society

Education vital to future, says Dr M

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and nation."

He said he was proud to note that the board emphasised technology and various disciplines such as human science, engineering, construction, communications, research and development, medicine, economics, petrochemicals, information technology, transportation and aerospace.

Dr Mahathir added the nation's future depended greatly on investment in the people's education.

"We all know that education is never ending and did not stop at any level. It is a life-long process," he said.

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