

Dr M: Master new

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Malaysians must be prepared to equip themselves with new technologies, improve on their perseverance and determination and cooperate to help the nation prosper further.

He said these attributes would then help the nation face the challenges in an ever competitive world.

He said the people must not only have the faith and confidence to acquire and master all forms of technologies, but must also apply them to invent new things.

This was not impossible, he said, adding the failure of the nation to equip itself with technological advances would impair its aim of achieving a developed country's status.

"The resources we have will not last forever. Provided we upgrade our capability by acquiring new technologies, we will not be able to utilise the resources available to us more efficiently," he said in his Na-

tional Day message over radio and television tonight.

Dr Mahathir said to develop the country into a modern nation, able to compete with others and to be dynamic, the people should have perseverance and determination.

He said steps must be taken to ensure that the nation's desire to become a "clean" developed nation was realised, unlike some other developed countries.

"We have about 25 years to achieve the targets of Vision 2020. We cannot be satisfied with the current performance and success. Much more needs to be done to ensure that the quality and form of developed status that we desire are attained.

"Whether or not we achieve our targets depends on us. We must possess a high level of confidence to progress.

"What others can do, so can we. What is needed is our willingness and desire to try harder and to be bold enough to face all chal-

lenges."

He said others (who succeeded) did not possess special powers or able to produce miracles.

"They are human beings like us too. The only thing is they believe they are capable, based on their achievements thus far."

Dr Mahathir noted that the standard of living of the people today was not only much higher than what it was when the country achieved independence, but it enabled them to enjoy facilities comparable with that of developed countries.

"Malaysia is developing so rapidly that it is recognised by international organisations as a model of development for developing countries.

"Not many countries which attained independence about the same time as ours or earlier have achieved success the way we have.

"It is not that we want to thump our chest, but this is the reality and every Malaysian can take pride in the

success and achievements of the country after independence.

"They have every right to be proud as all the success is the result of their own efforts and sacrifices.

"Although we are of different races and religions, the spirit of tolerance and co-operation among the various races has enabled Malaysia to continue to be stable and develop rapidly."

Everyone desired success but it had its price and problems, he said, adding this was evident when certain parties, uneasy over Malaysia's success, tried to prevent it from progressing further and becoming a strong competitor to them.

"They accuse Malaysia of being undemocratic, violating human rights, neglecting the environment and denying our workers from taking industrial action.

"Now, they have even threatened to withdraw our privileges under the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) on the grounds that we have achieved the

technologies

developed nation status.

"We have to accept the fact that, sooner or later, this facility (GSP) will be removed. What we ought to do now is to increase our productivity so that even if our exports are taxed, we will be able to compete."

He said the country was stable because the people and their leaders were moderate, responsible and not greedy in pursuing their aims as they took into account the interests of others and the country.

"If the people and leaders want to grab something for themselves without taking into account the effects on others or their long-term consequences, there will be chaos and the stability and peace we now enjoy will end."

If the country was not stable, he said, it would be impossible to develop the nation.

The investors wanted a guarantee of long-term stability and only the people could guarantee this, he said.

Malaysia today was not only seen as a peaceful country but also as being progressive and prosperous, he said.

"Our economy is strong and continues to expand. From a nation which depended on the export of primary commodities like rubber and tin, we now export manufactured goods which account for 78 per cent of the total value of our exports."

He said the Government would continue to introduce measures that would help the economy grow in a peaceful and stable environment.

Co-operation between the private sector and the Government in the Malaysia Incorporated concept formed one of the foundations of the nation's management, he said.

"So too in the case of privatisation which is aimed at helping the Government and the people."

The notion that it was not the Government's responsibility to help the private sec-

tor to achieve success was shallow, he said.

The revenue collected by the Government to bear management expenses and development came from the activities of the private sector, he said.

It was, therefore, certain that if the private sector failed, not enough taxes would be collected by the Government, he said.

Conversely, if the private sector made good profit, he said, more than 30 per cent of it belonged to the Government.

On this basis, when the Government helped the private sector, the Government was actually helping itself and the people, he said.

The high economic growth that Malaysia was experiencing was the result of the Malaysia Incorporated concept and privatisation, he said.

He added that the people must understand that everything being introduced by the Government was for the nation and the people.