

Life's so easy for today's young without challenges

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. — Today's youths lack the spirit of challenge as they do not face many challenges, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

Dr Mahathir said today's youths were not preparing themselves to take over from the current ageing leaders.

The Prime Minister said: "We are concerned about our youth and their tendency to be so relaxed and not investing time preparing themselves to take over from older leaders.

"Today's generation is growing up in a more congenial atmosphere without too many challenges or having any real struggle."

He said today's youth did not consider that the experience of people was really relevant.

Dr Mahathir said they felt that the world had changed and they did not have to learn from the experience of past leaders or have knowledge about their heroic deeds.

"Nevertheless, we have to look back in order to know our way forward, and even to know where we are now."

Quoting from George Santayana, he said, those who ignored the lessons of history were condemned to repeat the mistakes of history over and over again.

"If we do not look back at the past then we will be committing the same mistakes over and over again because after each mistake we make, we ignore it as if it has never happened," he said in his address to representatives of the United Kingdom Malaysian Students Executive Council (UKEC) at Kelab Darul Ehsan in Ampang today.

Dr Mahathir said it was, therefore, important to look at the past to seek lessons from it.

He said since Independence in 1957, the country had progressed.

"Now we are dealing with a generation born after independence, born in a country which has become quite

prosperous and does not suffer from lack of opportunities." So the tendency for the people, he said, was to take things easy.

He said they felt that there was no need to be concerned as the struggles of the early years of independence were history.

"The feeling is that there is no need for struggle and the time is ripe for us to enjoy ourselves as well as the fruits of our independence.

"I must say this is also the current feeling among Umno members. They feel that this is the time to enjoy as we have got the power for ourselves...why should we bother about the future?"

Dr Mahathir said he used to tell stories to Umno members of how he cycled 57km to Kangar from Alor Star to participate in some youth movement activity to muster support to counter the British plan for a Malayan Union.

"I thought that it was a great thing. But now Umno

members would not dream of cycling. They expect their airfare paid for attending a meeting in Kuala Lumpur and they want to stay in the best hotels."

He said when he pointed to them of the past they would say that that was in the past but "now we have the money."

Dr Mahathir said the general feeling was that the struggles were over and now what remained was to enjoy the fruits of the earlier struggles.

He said many Malaysians were still very poor and there were many who needed help.

"So the struggle must go on and it was those who are concerned about the lot of the people who should continue with the struggle.

"We have to continue the struggle but it may not be in the same form, but the struggle is still a struggle.

"We must help as many Malaysians as possible to attain the standard of living of a developed nation."