

03/10/1998

Moral values all-important, says PM

Saiful Azhar Abdullah

ALOR STAR, Fri. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today reminded Malaysians of the importance of having high moral values besides striving for excellence.

Reminding the people of the weaknesses of Western society, he said a knowledgeable society would be destroyed if it had low moral values.

He was speaking at the presentation of the Kolej Sultan Abdul Hamid Iskandar award for excellence and the opening of the college's computer laboratory.

Dr Mahathir said the nation would be able to achieve its aspirations of becoming a developed nation by the year 2020 if the people embraced high moral values.

He explained how the culture and thinking of the West had resulted in Western society losing its moral values.

Dr Mahathir said Western society had gone overboard in the name of freedom and the belief that freedom is the most important thing in their lives.

"And for them, there is no limit to freedom...for example if they want to be naked, they believe they have the right to do so and if they want to do something which is immoral, it is also their right," he added.

Dr Mahathir said if these immoral values were allowed to be inculcated in society, the nation would crumble.

"We will never achieve our wish to become a developed nation by the year 2020 and we will not be able to compete with developed nations," he said.

But Dr Mahathir said the people were eager to strive to ensure that Malaysia achieved the developed nation status.

He also recalled his days as a student of the college where he obtained his junior and senior Cambridge certificates.

Impressed with the changes at the college, he said in the past, students of the college, which was then known as Government English School, were mostly children of the royalty and state dignitaries.

(The school was established in 1908 and its name was changed to Kolej Sultan Abdul Hamid in 1935.)

Dr Mahathir said he was told by his father, Mohamad Iskandar, who was the school's first principal, that the country's first Prime Minister, the late Tunku Abdul Rahman was carried on the shoulder by an aide to school "because as a prince, he must not touch the ground that is dirty."

In a light-hearted remark, the Prime Minister said his father's name was Mohamad and Iskandar was actually his grandfather.

Therefore, he said in jest that it was not really accurate to name the Iskandar Primary School after his grandfather as he had not made any contribution to the school.

Dr Mahathir also advised the students not to have an inferiority complex but to prove that they had the capability to compete with others.

The Prime Minister also said unlike in the past, learning had become simpler with the aid of sophisticated gadgets like computers.

However, he reminded the students on the misuse of computers, saying that it was their choice whether to use the computers for good or for bad.

Likening a computer to a knife, he said a knife could be used to create a beautiful carving but an irresponsible person could use it to murder.

The Prime Minister was accompanied to the ceremony by his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali. Also present was Menteri Besar Tan Sri

Sanusi Junid.

Later, Dr Mahathir presented the Iskandar award, which carries a cash prize of RM1,000, to Upper Sixth form student Mohd Sani Abu Hassan for his overall achievement.

He then opened the computer laboratory and launched the college's homepage.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir and his wife were given a rousing welcome on his arrival at the Sultan Abdul Halim airport.

About 1,000 Barisan Nasional leaders and members carrying party flags and banners supporting the Prime Minister joined Sanusi to welcome him.

After the function at Kolej Sultan Abdul Hamid, Dr Mahathir had a closed door meeting with Kubang Pasu BN leaders at the Kubang Pasu district office in Jitra.

He performed the Friday prayers at Masjid Guar Napai and attended another closed-door meeting on the development of Kubang Pasu district at the district office.

(END)