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PM advises students abroad to gain knowledge and skills

Nuraina Samad in Tokyo

DATUK Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday called on Malaysian students abroad to have the determination and resolve to gain knowledge and skills to enable them to continue the process of nation building.

"We have great hope for you to return home and continue the process of developing Malaysia to become a developed nation by the year 2020.

"You must have the confidence to excel in whatever you are doing and have faith that you are as good as anyone else," the Prime Minister told some 400 Malaysian students and professionals at the Malaysian embassy here.

Dr Mahathir advised them to return home with the skills they have acquired in Japan as well as the Japanese work ethics which have proven to be valuable in the development process.

He said he was inspired by the resolve and determination of the Japanese when he visited Japan in 1961 as the East Asian country was attempting to rebuild and reconstruct itself after it was devastated by war.

He said he was awed by the spirit of commitment and dedication demonstrated by the Japanese as they picked up the pieces in the wake of the destruction.

He said the unprecedented success story of Japan raised his confidence to develop Malaysia further than just rural development.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was capable of more as he felt that if Japan, being an Asian nation could overcome the odds, there was no reason why Malaysia could not.

He reminded the students that the old perception of Japan as a producer of inferior goods was discarded as the country emerged to be an economic powerhouse.

Dr Mahathir, however, reminded the students to return home with their moral and cultural values preserved and to reject western values.

He also advised them to have a good command of the English language to excel in information technology as much of the information in this area was in English.

The Prime Minister also took several questions from the students and graduates of Japanese universities who asked about Vision 2020 and the Multimedia Supercorridor.

Dr Mahathir pointed out that Malaysia is a fast developing nation whose industrial capacity was high. The country may not be as rich as other developing countries such as Saudi Arabia but the people are highly skilled and educated.

This, he said, had led to world recognition of Malaysia's level of development.

"You must be committed and have the confidence to achieve ... so that you can stand tall and walk tall," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who is here on a two-day working visit, is accompanied by his wife Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali. They return home tomorrow.

Also present at the embassy was Malaysian ambassador to Japan Datuk Marzuki Mohd Nor.