

16/05/2001

PM extols spirit of volunteerism

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IPOH, Tues. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad called on youths to adopt the spirit of volunteerism and put the welfare of others before one's self to create a more caring Malaysian community.

He said volunteerism, which meant doing good deeds voluntarily without thinking of the rewards, was the best way to build a nation of people who were compassionate and caring.

As such he urged youths of all races to congregate as Malaysians and work towards a common goal - to help each other in whatever manner they could in order to imbue a feeling of goodness in the community.

Speaking at the launching of the National Youth Day celebrations at Perak Stadium tonight, Dr Mahathir said youths played an important role in promoting the spirit of volunteerism.

He said this was because the awareness of volunteerism should start from the youths.

"If youths do not realise from now that it is important for volunteerism to be a part of their lives, they will have difficulty in trying to bridge the gap among the many races this country has been endowed with."

The most important aspect of volunteerism is doing good deeds and then feeling good about it.

"For example, when you help a blind man cross the road, you should not expect any rewards. What you should feel is being proud that you have done something good because you have helped the man cross the road safely."

Dr Mahathir said the theme of the Youth celebrations - "Volunteerism Promotes Unity (Kesukarelawan Pemangkin Perpaduan) - was most appropriate now because unity was the one goal that youths should work towards.

He said the motto of putting one's self above others as propagated by the West should not be emulated by Malaysians as it could destroy the Government's objective of a prosperous multi-racial country.

Dr Mahathir said the Government gave the utmost support to youth organisations in the country and youths must realise this as they were the generation that would develop and lead the country in the future.

He also said it was of paramount importance that youth leaders were responsible and did not possess other motives than to better the community.

"Remember our country is ours to govern, nobody has the right to plan or manage our future.

"Therefore youths must treat their role seriously and not allow foreign influence to seep into their minds and spoil the balance of harmony."

More than 30,000 youths from various organisations participated in the gathering today.

Also present was Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Tajol Rosli Ghazali, Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein and Malaysian Youth Council president Saifuddin Abdullah.