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PM: Rekindle patriotic spirit

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SHAH ALAM, Sun. - Malaysians must rekindle their patriotic spirit to guard against harmful foreign values, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said today.

"The time has come for us to re-inculcate the spirit of patriotism because we are facing a new challenge in this new millennium," he said at the New Millennium Patriotism gathering at the Malawati Stadium, here.

Outlining the challenge facing the country, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia would be destroyed if the people were overtaken by negative foreign values.

He added that these values called upon Malaysians to consider themselves citizens of the world instead of the country.

"This concept of a world without borders means that countries like Malaysia will no longer exist," he said.

The Prime Minister added that Malaysia could end up becoming a mere dominion of the borderless world, bereft of independence.

The gathering was organised by the Malaysian Youth Council with the co-operation of the Youth and Sports Ministry.

Some 15,000 students from schools and institutions of higher learning nationwide attended the event.

Negative foreign values, said Dr Mahathir, were flooding the country through foreign media, entertainment and the Web.

The Prime Minister said it was impossible to stop the spread of these values, adding that a redefined patriotic spirit was our only protection.

He said if nothing was done to rekindle patriotism, the country would lose its national identity.

He said in such a situation, students would no longer be inculcated with the national spirit, but introduced to concepts like the borderless world.

"We will no longer feel ashamed to turn our backs on our country and race, because our country does not adequately accept values espoused by globalisation."

The Prime Minister said, at present, some Malaysians had already adopted these values.

"There are those among us who already accept that they are citizens of the world and feel they are no longer citizens of this country."

The Prime Minister cited the four basic tenets of this "new" patriotism, which he described as "patriotism in the new millennium".

They are a resilient and permanent love of Malaysia, the spirit of togetherness, pride in being a Malaysian and the spirit of loyalty to the country.

Dr Mahathir urged the younger generation to emulate the "new millennium Malaysians and their record-breaking attempts such as scaling the Everest, circumnavigating the globe or parachuting to the North Pole".

Dr Mahathir said if the erosion of the patriotic spirit continued unabated among the younger generation, they would end up becoming adults who did not love their country.

"It would be very easy for outsiders to come in and persuade this generation to work in league with them to erode our freedom and independence."

Dr Mahathir said the people must develop their own mechanisms to protect themselves against such values.

"This is your responsibility, so let us re-inculcate the spirit of

patriotism to develop and defend the dignity and independence of our country," said Dr Mahathir.

The New Millennium Patriotism concept will be implemented by the Malaysian Youth Council and other organisations through several means. For example, the MYC and the Youth Academy will conduct specific programmes, seminars and courses.

The concept will also be implemented in government programmes such as the Rakan Muda.

The third strategy is to inculcate the spirit of patriotism by airing patriotic songs on television and radio. The text of Dr Mahathir's speech will also be distributed nationwide by the MYC as the nation's New Millennium Patriotism Message.

Also present today were Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein, Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Dr Mohd Khir Toyo and MYC president Saifuddin Abdullah.