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PM: Appreciate nation's freedom

SHAH ALAM: Malaysians should never take for granted the country's independence and the benefits it affords them. Prime Minister Datuk Seri 'Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

He said there were some people who believed that once independence had been achieved the country would be free forever.

"They believe that the independence we all enjoy now will last forever. They believe we can maintain our freedom without any effort. These people have betrayed those who fought and sacrificed for our independence.

"We should never forget the meaning of our independence because if we do, we will not appreciate and defend it," he said at the launching of Universiti 'Teknologi Mara's

National Day Festival at its stadium here last night.

Also present were the Prime Minister's wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Ali, Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Mohamed Khir Toyo and Deputy Education Minister Datuk Abdul Aziz Shamsuddin.

Dr Mahathir said the younger generation could help preserve the country's independence by acquiring as much knowledge as possible.

He said knowledge would also enable the country to invent and produce weapons to defend the country and its races in war.

Dr Mahathir also announced a one-day holiday for the university's staff and students today for their efforts and willingness to brave the rain for the event.