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Dr M: Learn to be resilient

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REMBAU, Thurs. - Malaysians must analyse and learn from the success and downfall of the various cultures in the world to enable them to be resilient and garner positive traits.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Malaysians, irrespective of their cultural and social background, must also be ready to discard their negative cultural traits in their pursuit of greater advancement.

"I hope we can have a little responsibility towards our race and be willing to discard negative cultures and accept better ones which could assist us in our pursuit for progress," Dr Mahathir said.

He was speaking at a Hari Raya gathering at the National Civics Bureau spiritual upliftment camp in Ulu Sepri, near here today.

Citing the Mongols, the Russians and the Islamic empires of the past, Dr Mahathir said these are interesting case studies which could provide great insides on the role of culture and unity.

He said the Mongols were once nomadic, fragmented and comprised various ethnic groups and were weak until Genghis Khan united them with force.

"Genghis Khan managed to turn them into a united lot and they became stronger. He then further motivated them into giving their lives for the Mongol empire's expansion," Dr Mahathir said.

He said that however, when the Mongol empire came under the rule of Genghis Khan's grandson, the empire crumbled as disunity set in.

Dr Mahathir also cited another important example of how positive traits transformed Russia under the rule of Peter the Great.

He said Peter the Great transformed the Russians from a backward lot into a world power.

"The Russians became a world power that defeated and occupied territories once ruled by the Mongols and that removed the Turks from being masters of the Uzbeks, Kazakhs and others," Dr Mahathir said.

He said Genghis Khan and Peter the Great were typical of leaders who cultivated in their people values different from those who only stagnated their nations in backwardness.

Dr Mahathir also cited the disintegration of the Islamic empire as an example of a downfall due to disunity and orthodox cultural traits.

The Muslims, he said, were able to rule for 1,300 years over an empire from capitals in the middle east namely Damascus and Baghdad and another in Istanbul.

However the empire crumbled because of division among Muslims who hung on to orthodox cultures.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir delivered a motivational talk to 86 senior government officers, corporate figures and key individuals taking part in a four-day resilience-building course at the camp.

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