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Dr M's ideas behind Malaysia's success story

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Malaysia would not be where it is today if not for Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who implemented his ideas during his 22-year tenure, National Economic Action Council special adviser Datuk Rahmah Abu Kassim said today.

Rahmah said when Dr Mahathir took over the leadership reins in 1981, he had taken the role of a doctor and was looking at the country as if it were a "sick patient" that needed to be "diagnosed with the proper medication".

Being a doctor, Dr Mahathir might have seen the country as suffering from some kind of illness and came up with antidotes to cure the country of its economic woes, and as could be seen today, the "treatment" had been a success, she said.

Rahmah was giving her views of Dr Mahathir's forceful leadership at the second series of economic forum between students of institutions of higher learning and the NEAC.

She said the country had seen various changes under Dr Mahathir. It was now less dependent on government sectors and was focusing more on the private sector.

Although Dr Mahathir implemented monumental projects, he also placed importance on the rural areas by coming up with various development projects with the objective of eliminating poverty.

She said the introduction of Vision 2020 was to mould the country based on his own principles, which saw the nation becoming an industrialised entity.

The 200 students who participated in the forum were from Universiti Malaya, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, Malaysian Multimedia University, Kolej Universiti Sains and Teknologi, Kolej Universiti Teknikal Kebangsaan, Kolej Universiti Kejuruteraan Utara and Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris.

Head of the NEAC globalisation consultant team Prof Dr Mahani Zainal Abidin spoke on the importance of being receptive to globalisation, while retaining the country's values and culture.

She cited Japan where the women used to walk three steps behind men, but today they moved four steps ahead of them.

"This is what globalisation can do and if culture and values are preserved," she said.