

Dr M whips up memories of 'rotan' on Teachers' Day

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In the spirit of Teachers' Day, Dr Mahathir Mohamad - soon to blow out 100 birthday candles in July - took a nostalgic stroll down memory lane, recalling his school days.

“When I was growing up, parents went to the school and handed their children to the teachers with orders - ‘If they are naughty and stubborn, ‘rotan’ (cane) them. Teach them like how you would teach your own children. As long as it does not break or bend’,” he said in a video posted on his Facebook.

Acknowledging that times have changed, Mahathir said the cane is no longer employed to mould students.

“Yet it (the cane) remains in memory, of how teachers and discipline are inseparable,” he added, without revealing whether he, too, had been subjected to the rod in school.

Mahathir said that a teacher carries immense responsibility, and that parents place great hope in educators to instil knowledge, discipline, and proper

etiquette in their children.

“This is the reason why teachers are glorified and celebrated. The future of this nation’s children is engraved in their hands,” he added.

Mahathir said that after a child’s parents, it is the teacher who shapes the “black and white” of his or her life for the future.

“It is simple. If you listen to the teachings and messages of the teacher, God willing, life will be organised and successful.

“If life is not peaceful and replete with failures, it is because of not listening to the teacher’s lessons,” he concluded.

Mahathir, who was born in Alor Setar, Kedah, in 1925, is said to have excelled in school. His late father, Mohamad Iskandar, was a headmaster in an English-medium secondary school.

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