

Priority on acquiring first-class mentality

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FROM the day he took office as the country's fifth Prime Minister on Nov 1, 2004, one of Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's missions was to nurture Malaysians into having a first-class mentality.

He emphasised the need for society to be knowledgeable and competitive, and to have a high performance culture, integrity and strong moral values; in short, having a first-class mindset.

Abdullah stressed these values during the numerous meetings he had with ministers, MPs, policymakers, professionals, civil servants, corporate leaders and even

9th Malaysia Plan

undergraduates from local and foreign universities.

When tabling the Ninth Malaysia Plan in Parliament yesterday, Abdullah once again emphasised the need "to have human capital with first-class mentality and nurturing a society with a first-class mindset."

The first step to achieving this, he said, was through increasing the capacity and

mastery of knowledge.

The next step will be to strengthen the nation's capabilities in science, research, development and innovation.

The final strategy is to nurture a cultured society that possesses strong moral values.

Abdullah said the biggest challenge for Malaysia under the 9MP was human capital development and upgrading the people's intellectual capacity.

"If we wish to become a knowledge-based economy, if we wish to be a developed country and maintain that developed status, the development of human capital must be made a priority," he said.

In the context of globalisation, Abdullah said high quality human capital was no longer a luxury but a necessity.

The prime minister said the way forward to developed status was through expanding the quality of human capital.

He said having a first-class mindset would nurture a society of learned people who appreciate culture, arts and heritage, as well as the history of their nation, race and religion.

He said direct participation by Malaysians in culture, art and heritage activities would contribute to the holistic development of human capital while strengthening national unity.