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Offering a few pointers

Mahathir on what it takes to lead a nation to greater heights

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PUTRAJAYA: Aspiring leaders who resort to unethical ways and even violence should be rejected outright, says Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The former Prime Minister said anyone wanting to be a leader could try to acquire the right qualities but may not succeed.

"How he handles his failure will demonstrate whether he really has the qualities," Dr Mahathir told an undergraduate conference here yesterday.

"There are perhaps a 1,000 people in Malaysia with good leadership qualities but they are never going to make it simply because the circumstances are not propitious," he said.

On the other hand, he said, there may be people with poor leadership qualities who may become leaders because leadership is thrust upon them.

The seven attributes of a good leader, Dr Mahathir said, were:

> A good leader may not be humble but at least he should not be boastful.

> He must be prepared to accept responsibility

»A leader must know how to make his ideas become reality«



TUN DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD

ties but should not be too pushy and insistent on taking the lead.

> He should not seek to blame others for failures but to admit his own culpability. He should not point fingers or seek scapegoats.

> He should be modest and not seek praise and glory.

> He should know how to handle his followers as much as his superiors. He must be sensitive to

the sensitivities of others.

> He should be willing to do what he expects others to do. He should uphold the slogan of leadership by example.

> He should be learned and more intelligent at least by comparison to the people he leads.

Dr Mahathir said a leader must know how to make his ideas become reality.

He said a leader must be aware of the needs and desires of his people, to evaluate them, to direct them in the proper direction, and to plan and execute together with his followers the objectives successfully.

He said the rise of great nations was invariably due to good leadership.

"When the leaders are incompetent, the countries would fall. The people may be the same, the background and the wealth and resources may be the same, but when leaders are incompetent or just plain bad, then great nations, even great empires can fall," said Dr Mahathir, who was prime minister for 22 years. — Bernama