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Dr M urges youth not to copy blindly from West

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BE INDEPENDENT: Former PM tells Malaysians to break away from 'eurocentric' mindset

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MALAYSIANS are more "eurocentric" than ever before, former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

"Break away and try to be independent, and not just copy anything that comes from the West," he told some 300 Malaysian student leaders from universities from all over the United Kingdom.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysian youth in a globalised world needed to be independent.

"Do not just follow the West just because they are the West. Try to get away from this idea that the world is eurocentric and whatever comes from Europe, you must copy. Try

to be independent, reject what is wrong and accept what is right," he said in his keynote address at the 11th "Projek Amanat Rakyat" conference.

Themed "Globalising the Youth of Malaysia", the event was organised by the United Kingdom and Eire Council for Malaysian Students (UKEC).

Dr Mahathir said Malaysians should not be too fixed in their minds about anything.

"Our country must remain democratic but our democracy must not be unlimited. Our democracy must respect the right of the majority to rule the country and the right of the minority to protest, but not to the point of overthrowing the government."

Referring to protests in Thailand, Syria, Egypt and Ukraine, he said: "You have the choice of either to abuse democracy to the point of destroying ourselves because it is European or limit yourself, hold yourself back, stand back and study the consequences, the things that are happening in other countries where democracy is abused."

Dr Mahathir told the students they needed to make the decision on their own as they were intelligent enough to make the right choice.

"So, that is the role of the Malaysian youth in future. We need the right kind of people with

the right kind of thinking to ensure the country will continue to grow and develop."

Looking fit and in "top form", Dr Mahathir bowled over his audience with his wit and sharp takes on events, but on a serious note, warned them of a disunited country.

"I am sure the future of our country will be great provided we accept the fact that we are a multiracial country, that no single race can rule the country by themselves in the exercise of power in our country and in the distribution of wealth. If we accept that in our multiracial country that we should share our country among ourselves, we can be sure that our country can be stable and you will be able to grow our country with your skills, your knowledge which you are here to acquire."

Youth and Sports Minister Khairy Jamaluddin, in closing the conference, said it was important to listen to the views of the youth.

He said the youth should be global players and not be contented as heroes only in their own country. Other speakers were Mercy Malaysia founder and Teach for Malaysia chairman Tan Sri Dr Jamilah Mahmood, Sime Darby Group chief operating officer Datuk Seri Abdul Wahab Maskan and IDEAS and Young Corporate Minds co-founder Wan Firdaus Wan Fuaad.