

**Malaysia needs to study practices in other countries, for ageing population - Tun Mahathir**

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**By S. Joan Santani**

PUTRAJAYA, Sept 15 (Bernama) -- Malaysia needs to study the practices in other countries, particularly developed nations with regard to how to care for the ageing population, said Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"We are going into that area where there is an ageing population. So how do you look after them? It is not just a question of giving accommodation but to keep them active because if they're not active they sort of fade away," he added.

"Most developed societies also have some funds to help the old people, people who are unable to earn a living, and who need to be taken care of.

"That thing can be done by way of insurance contributions while they are still working...it's almost like Employees Provident Fund (EPF).

"However, the EPF amount is barely sufficient to cover for a long term period as old people now have longer life expectancy," he said in an interview with The Third Age Media Association and Bernama News Channel (BNC) recently.

The full interview will be aired over BNC today at 11.30pm and will be repeated at 11.30pm on Sunday, 5pm (Monday), 12 noon and 5pm (Sept 22), 5pm (Sept 23), 9am (Sept 29) and 5pm (Sept 30).

BNC airs over *Astro 502*, *Unifi TV 631* and *MYTV 121* and can be viewed around the world on the website, [www.bernama.com](http://www.bernama.com), Facebook and on YouTube.

The life expectancy of Malaysians is at an average of 75 years, and therefore a person needs savings to last between 15 and 20 years post retirement.

A study earlier this year conducted by the Insured Retirement Institute (IRI) revealed less than 25 per cent of working people interviewed believe they will have enough money to support them through their retirement years.

The majority said they cannot afford to retire.

According to EPF, for a retiree to be able to spend at least RM800 a month for the next two decades (until he reaches 75), he or she must at least have RM196,800 or RM200,000.

Dr Mahathir said a study had to be carried out in that area to determine how long a life-savings can last just like what the other nations do, especially the developed nations.

He advised parents of this new generation to look after themselves by keeping busy and active as the Asian tradition where older people depend on their children to support them in their golden years seems to be fading.

In order to be active, older people should participate in talks or group discussions to exercise their mind, because they will be able to talk about subjects or their observation about certain subjects, he said.

Dr Mahathir, who has the distinction of being the oldest Prime Minister in the world, explained that muscles would deteriorate if they are not used, and therefore, it is important for them to actively engage in activities.

"The tendency for them to do nothing is bad because when you do nothing, you don't exercise your muscles, your body, and you don't exercise your mind too.

"When the mind is not exercised, it behaves in the same way as the muscles. The muscles

regress, the mind also regresses and it becomes quite useless," he added.

"When you sleep, of course the muscles will not function, and they begin to become very weak, as you become very weak, you will have the tendency to sleep more, so you will regress both in mind and body.

"So that is my belief. It is not backed by any scientific studies. My observation since I was practising as a doctor many years ago is that it is important to be active," he added.

Dr Mahathir said the society must create means by which people can be actively participating in certain things and do charity works.

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