

Mahathir: Knowledge an Important Tool To Succeed

BERNAMA: 29 August 2005

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 29 (Bernama) -- Gaining knowledge through experience and learning and the ability to utilise it by strategic thinking are important tools to succeed, former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Monday.



A young man of today could be more knowledgeable than an 80-year-old man if he cared to study the knowledge accumulated by others before him, by scholars and observers of the past, he said in his keynote address entitled "Thinking of the Thinker" at a seminar organised by the International Islamic University here. He said that many of the things that Malaysia did, such as the Look East policy, were the result of studying the strategies and the successes of other countries.

"We learnt the importance of methods, systems, and strategies from the ethics of Europeans. But we noted that after the war, the defeated Japanese were better able to recover than the victorious Europeans," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who is honorary president of the Perdana Leadership Foundation, said that copying the successful was logical but Malaysia was able to think who was more successful and worth copying. He said others might have seen Japan's success but did not think of using Japan as a model.

Dr Mahathir said that during the 1997 financial crisis, the fear of colonisation galvanised Malaysia into thinking and seeking a solution that would not only rehabilitate the country's economy and finance but also independence.

"After educating ourselves about the workings of the currency, the way currency trading is done and gathering all the data, it was possible to devise a way to prevent access to the currency and put a stop to the trading. The solution was not perfect of course. There was always a risk of failure. Contingencies had to be prepared. Much thinking, much analysis had to go into the formulation of counter measures," he said.

Touching on Muslims, he said gaining knowledge, especially in science, would actually strengthen the Ummah and increase their faith in Allah. In the era of pioneer Muslim scientists, Islam and the Muslims were highly respected, they were not oppressed or labelled as terrorist, hunted and hounded all over the world, he said.

"Now Muslims are far behind because someone interpreted that only studying religion would earn us merit in the "akhirat" (Hereafter). The misfortunes in the world must be ignored, because for us there will be heaven in the akhirat," he said.

"We can succeed and be strong if we think before we leap. Not to think is to fail to appreciate and value this gift. Similarly, to abuse this gift and do wrong would be to show ungratefulness to the Maker," he added.