

'Students must realise 9MP goal'

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■ From Zaharah Othman in London

TODAY'S students should prepare themselves for the role they will play as leaders of a developed nation.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the Ninth Malaysia Plan was among the steps undertaken by Malaysia to attain developed status.

"I pray that God allows me to live long enough to listen to the proclamation that Malaysia is a developed nation," he told Malaysian officials and students at a meeting at the Malaysian High Commission in Belgrave Square where he outlined facets of the 9MP.

In a speech full of analogies, the Prime Minister likened the 9MP as part of a baton relay.

"I would like to see the day when the runner touches the tape of 2020 and proclaims that Malaysia is a developed nation and at that moment we should all be proud and thank

If our intention is to be a developed nation, then our playing field is global and no longer national.

Abdullah

God for the strengths that he has given us."

The 9MP, he said, was just the first round of the race.

The second runner to carry the baton must run faster, and the third and final runners hopefully touch the tape of 2020 in good time and declare Malaysia a developed nation.

"The person who passes the baton must ensure that he has done his work well and the

second runner must ensure he does not drop it. The combined efforts of this relay will make Malaysia a developed nation."

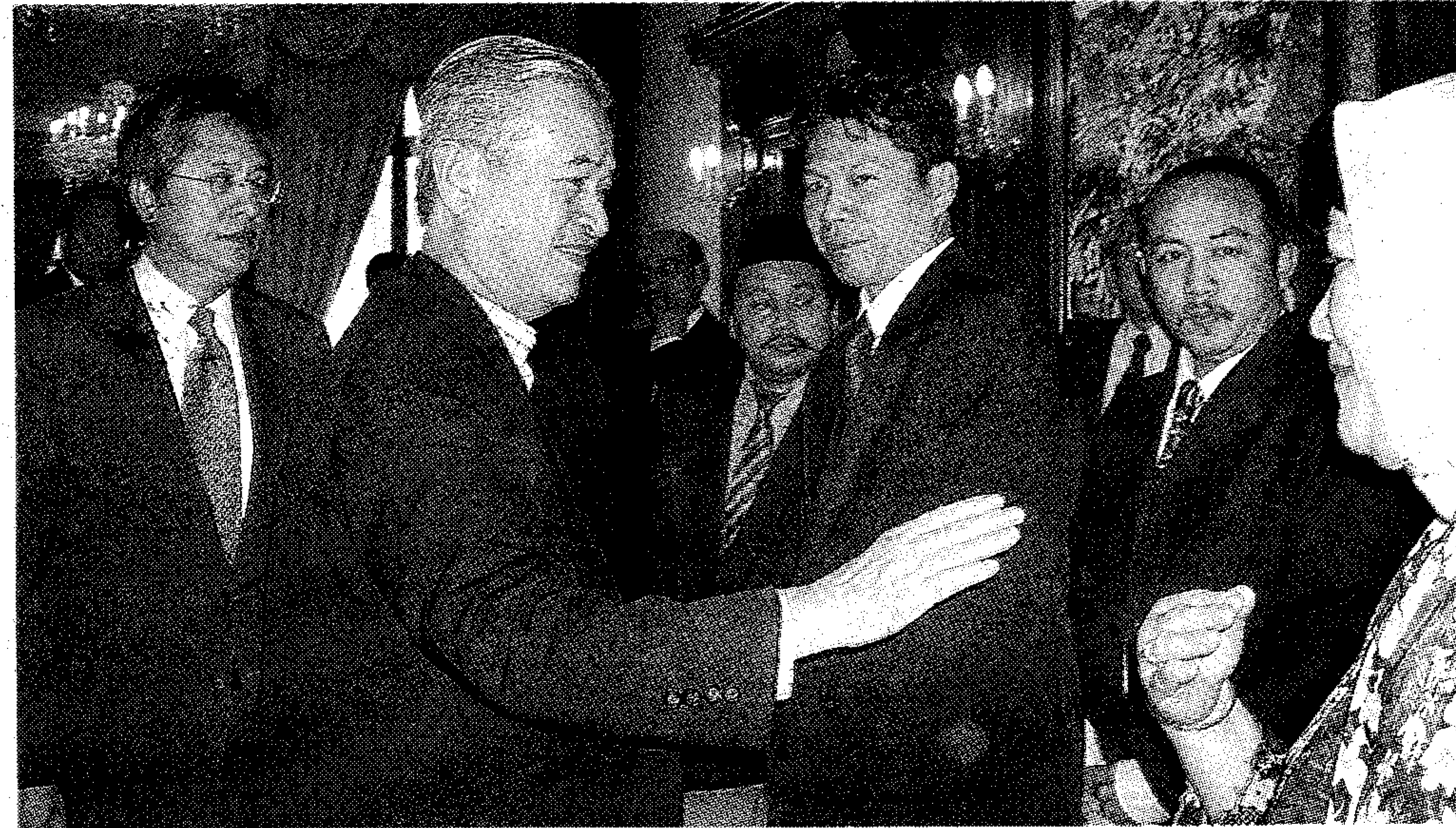
The Prime Minister, who at times was emotional, told officials and students that they were the first to be briefed since the 9MP was passed in Parliament.

Abdullah was in London for a stopover before proceeding to St Vincent in the Caribbean.

"Those in the chairs in front, I believe are working for the Government. It is surely a matter of time before those sitting at the back (students) take over.

"After that, they can no longer be armchair critics. It will no longer be so simple as observing from below. So, prepare for this role. This plan is for this generation, because we are providing you with the opportunity.

"I want all of you to work hard to deliver what is expected of you, the quality in contri-



Abdullah meeting officials and students. On the left is Malaysian High Commissioner to Britain Datuk Abd Aziz Mohammed.

butions must be better than today's because now you have many more opportunities.

"If our intention is to be a developed nation, then our play-

ing field is global and no longer national."

Abdullah said that in order to get a sizeable portion of the global market, global accep-

tance and recognition, there must be people with first-class mentality producing products and services that were first-class.