

Dr M advises Malays to work hard

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KOTA KINABALU: Malays should work hard in order to excel in all fields either at national or international levels, former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamed said.

He said there are already many Malays in the country who have made their names internationally and there is no reason the present and future generations could not follow their footsteps.

"There are already Malays who succeeded in sailing across the world solo, swimming the English Channel and walking 1,000 kilometers across the Antarctic, among others," he said in his keynote speech at the Internationalization Malays Colloquium at Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), here on Saturday night.

The colloquium is organised by the International Relations Bureau and Non-Governmental Organisation wing of Umno Youth in collaboration with Sabah Umno Youth.

The former Premier added that in order to internationalise the Malays, they must first progress themselves so that they could develop the country as well.

He said international recognition could be gained if the country is fully developed and the bonus is that the Malays have the bright chance to get contracts abroad, especially from the Arab countries.

Mahathir also advised the Malays to make a balance between pleasures and acquiring knowledge because too much entertainment would lead to nowhere.

He said the bottom line is the Malays must equip themselves with the necessary knowledge because education is one of the ways to come out of backwardness.

According to him, internationalization could be realised if the Malays are strong in economy as it could influence the others, in particular, the international communities to respect Malaysians.

He said the Arabs were very influential a few hundred years ago when they had strong footings in international trading.

Dr Mahathir also said that Malays do not have exclusive rights to the use of the word "Malay" as it can be applied to all, including people in Sabah who are from one root.

Malay, he said, was a group of people who came from Sumatera "but now we regard people in the South East Asian region as Malays".

"In Sabah, I never felt that the people here are not Malay.

At times, I can only distinguish them as Malays and Malaysians," he said during a question and answer session.

Dr Mahathir said that even in the Philippines, the Filipinos regarded their independence fighter, Jose Rizal, as a Malay hero and not a Filipino hero.

Also attending the event that ends on May 14 were, among others, Mahathir's wife Tun Dr Hasmah Mohd Ali, Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Yahya Hussin and UMS Vice Chancellor Datuk Dr Mohd Noh Dalimin.