

# Go for high technology, says Dr M

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Asean countries should "leap-frog into modern science and technology" for economic gains.

He said the science and technology of these countries "relate to a way of life that we no longer need."

"Like it or not, we are now part of the mass consumption economy of the world.

"Therefore, our science and technology must be reoriented to this economic fact," he said when opening the First Asean Science and Technology Week at Putra World Trade Centre here today.

In this respect, he said, they could not go back to invent the wheels.

"We have to leap-frog and go straight into modern science and technology and learn from the advanced countries," he said.

To do so, he said, they must begin with the basics which can be acquired fairly easily.

They would also have to

do their own research and development, he said.

However, he said: "At the risk of stepping on some toes, I would like to say that sometimes we are unprepared either psychologically or in attitude to receive the technology we need.

"If we are going to get anywhere in the acquisition of technology we must prepare ourselves fully and go after what we want."

Dr Mahathir said Asean countries would also have to specialise and find areas to specialise in.

On the economic slowdown in Asean countries, Dr Mahathir said it was due to too much reliance on primary commodities.

He said the price of primary commodities have slumped and "they will never again be what they were in the last two decades."

"As more research and development of substitutes are done in the developed countries, the threat to Asean commodities will continue to increase," he warned.

Also present were Science, Technology and Environment Minister Datuk Amar Stephen Yong, Labour Minister Datuk Lee Kim Sai and representatives of Asean countries.

They are Singapore Minister of State for Education Dr Tay Eng Soon, Indonesian Minister of State for Research and Technology Prof. Dr Ing B.J. Habibie, Brunei Darussalam Minister for Development Pehin Datuk Abdul Rahman Taib, Prof Dr Quintin L. Kintanar of the Philippine National Science and Technology Authority and Dr Pairash Thajachayapong of Thailand.