

M'sia capable of being a world power

24 OCT 1992

KOTA BARU: Malaysia can become a world power despite its small population of only 18 million, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

The Prime Minister said the size of a nation was no hindrance to achieving its aspirations so long as the people were willing to work hard.

He said Malaysia's idea of a world power was not in terms of finance but an advanced, efficient and knowledgeable nation with high technological abilities.

"This will free us of our dependence on other nations," he told a huge gathering when launching the Kelantan Umno convention at Sekolah Menengah Hamzah in Machang.

"We may not achieve this tomorrow, the day after or even by the year 2020 but we can certainly be a world power someday with the ability to help persecuted nations such as Bosnia-Herzegovina and famine-stricken Somalia."

Dr Mahathir said Ma-

laysia was, at present, too weak to be of much help to both countries.

He said if Malaysia was strong, it could help any nation regardless of its religious faith and be highly respected as a useful nation to the world.

Dr Mahathir said Vision 2020 was created to turn Malaysia into a developed nation but not of the magnitude of the United States, Japan and the European countries.

He gave an assurance that a developed Malaysia would continue to hold fast to religion, moral and cultural values as well as human relations.

Refuting PAS' claim that Vision 2020 only emphasised material gain without preparations for the hereafter, Dr Mahathir said the vision was in fact aimed at striking a balance between this world and the hereafter.

Dr Mahathir also said Malaysia was noted widely to be the only country in the world today still growing steadily amidst the ailing global economy.