

# Dr M: Vital to learn foreign languages

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KUALA LUMPUR: The use of foreign languages will not affect the position of the national language, said Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Stressing the importance of mastering more than one language, the Prime Minister said the trend of mastering foreign languages should continue.

He said Malaysians would be able to have closer links with foreigners if they could speak more than one language.

"What is important is we have a common language. The best way of expanding the use of the national language is to give economic value to it," he said, adding that during his recent visit to China, many of his Malay security officials could converse with their counterparts in Mandarin.

"The national language has economic value. It is important that everyone understands the national language as they can benefit from it," he said.

Dr Mahathir also commended MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik for his fluency in the national language when delivering his address.

He said the government had never used force in promoting the Malay language.