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(EMBARGO: For use after 9.30 pm today, Aug 16)

Mahathir-knowledge

MALAYSIA CAN BUILD ROCKETS ONE DAY, SAYS MAHATHIR

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KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 16 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight <sup>93</sup> it was not impossible for Malaysia to build rockets for space travel one day.

He said those building rockets now were not extraordinary but just human beings with much more experience than Malaysians.

"About 100 years ago, even they were only as capable as people who were not highly civilised. We also can (achieve that)," he said in the interview "Bersama Perdana Menteri" (With the Prime Minister) over TV1.

Dr Mahathir was asked whether he was confident the quality of Malaysian workers would enable the country to grow into a better producer, or at the least compete strongly with other producers.

He said he believed that given adequate time, the people could acquire the efficiency and knowledge necessary to enhance their capability. -- more

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In this connection, he said, the government always trained the people to enhance their capability and experience in any endeavour.

He also said that the experience of others could be harnessed and improved on to progress more quickly.

This would eventually enable the people to master technology, no matter what the extent of its sophistication, he said.

Asked what he thought was most important in getting the people to pool their efforts to ensure all their plans succeeded, Dr Mahathir said he felt that it was knowledge.

"We cannot act effectively without understanding what we are doing, what the gains will be and what the results will be," he said. -- more

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Dr Mahathir said the Information Department had the important role of informing the people of what they were required to know for their participation in the national development process.

"It is also the government's responsibility to explain why the government does what it does," he said, and cited the example of privatisation of government departments.

He said many people initially assumed that a privatised government department would only think of making money, discharging poor service, paying low wages and sacking workers.

But, he said, it was evident that privatised departments were able to pay better salaries and bonus and give other benefits to their employees.

"The unfortunate are those who have not been privatised. That is why we try, if possible, to raise more taxes so that we can take care of the interests of those not yet privatised," he said. -- Bernama

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