

Mathematics vital for entrepreneurs

By Jeffrey Ramayah

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — Weakness in mathematics is one factor affecting the success of entrepreneurs, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said such weakness could not be overcome just with the aid of calculators, adding that a person had to know the basics and foundations of mathematics.

"This is important if we want to understand the answers we get when we use calculators and other related instruments which will only help to speed up the process.

"What is essential is the knowledge and ability to use such equipment," he said when launching the *Bi-jak Sifir* (know your multiplication) programme at Dataran Merdeka here.

The programme, jointly organised by Amanah Saham Nasional Berhad and the Education Ministry, is aimed at ensuring that primary school children are proficient in mathematics and calculations.

Also present at the launch

were Education Minister Datuk Dr Sulaiman Daud, Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat and Youth and Sports Minister Abdul Ghani Othman.

Dr Mahathir said mathematics was essential for various professional disciplines such as commerce, trade, industry and entrepreneurship.

People in these fields needed not only a mathematical mind but also a sharp and analytical one.

"In this context, the steps and measures taken by the Education Ministry to improve the quality of the teaching of mathematics at the primary school level have been timely and appropriate," he said.

It was also equally important for teachers of mathematics to be proficient in the subject so that they could impart such knowledge effectively to their students.

Dr Mahathir said the teachers must also be familiar with the different teaching aids used and ensure that the subject was interesting for the pupils.

"Mathematics also plays

an important role in one's daily life and as such it should be made relevant to the people's needs."

He hoped that such efforts to inculcate awareness of mathematics would be successful and hoped that they would not stop at the primary level.

"Such efforts should be continued on a long-term basis," he said.

He also urged all Malaysians to ensure that the country continued to forge ahead in development to achieve the objectives of Vision 2020.

Every sector had an equally important role to play, including the younger generation such as primary school pupils.

"The vision we have established is not only relevant to working people but to pupils too," he added.

Earlier, Amanah Saham Nasional Berhad chairman Tun Ismail Mohamed Ali said the educational programme placed emphasis in achieving efficiency in mathematics.

For a start, 84 schools would take part in the programme.