

# Commitment pays, says Mahathir

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By LEE KAR YEAN

KUALA LUMPUR: A strong sense of commitment to the community, family and nation would help realise the Asean dream of a prosperous and peaceful South-East Asia, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said last night.

"Our Asian values have

been our strength and we should take all possible measures to ensure that these values are deeply ingrained in our society for generations to come.

"Without commitment to the community, family and nation, our efforts to catch up with the developed nations will end in failure," the Prime Minister said.

He called on Asians to help upgrade the well-being of their family, community and country because it would help realise the Asean dream.

The development of a culture that was compatible with growth and development must be regarded as a priority to all Asean countries, he said during the Third Asean

Achievement Award ceremony.

Two Malaysians were among the 10 outstanding Asean individuals recognised in the fields of medicine, architecture, engineering, research and development, community service, visual arts, performing arts, sports and the Asean Businessman of the Year.

Dr Mahathir said Asean was entering a golden age that granted peace, stability and strong economic growth in the region.

"However, for this to happen we must make concerted efforts to address a number of problems confronting us in the advancement of Asean as a strong cohesive grouping."

Among the problems which remained unresolved were pockets of poverty in many Asean countries, the need to improve health care and raising the standard of education.

"The premium placed on good education could not be over-emphasised. We must continue to invest in education in a

world where new knowledge grows by geometrical progression."

He said there was less need to go abroad now as local educational institutions were more credible and they provided a wider range of courses.

He also suggested that Asean countries open up their education institutions to each other.