

P - DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMMAD
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MASTER ENGLISH, PM TELLS ENVOYS

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GENTING HIGHLANDS: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad wants Malaysian diplomats to make an urgent effort to master the English Language to deal effectively in international affairs.

"To negotiate treaties or agreements, your command of the English Language must be precise because if you use the wrong words, you will commit your country to an agreement

that is detrimental to its interests," the Prime Minister said.

One way to improve proficiency in the language, he said, was to read English story books.

"Malaysia is now playing a much bigger role in international affairs and it is necessary for us to have an impact politically and economically as a trading nation," he said when opening the heads of mission conference at Awana Golf Resort here.

About 100 Malaysian diplomats are attending the one-week conference.

Dr Mahathir said it was also im-

portant for Malaysian diplomats to uphold a good image of the country by being presentable and knowledgeable about the country's political and economic issues.

He said Malaysian missions overseas must provide all forms of assistance to Malaysian businessmen seeking deals.

"Make sure that they get in touch with genuine businessmen in the countries where they do business," he said.

"Do everything you can to ensure that they succeed in their business ventures because if they

are successful, the country is successful also."

Speaking to reporters later, Dr Mahathir said the newly recruited civil officers have less self-confidence in the English Language compared to the older generation.

To a question on Bosnia-Herzegovina, he said the country had requested the United Nations to supply arms to Malaysian soldiers in anticipation of a more active role of the UN.

"We want the arms to be supplied by the UN in view of the change in role from peace-keeping to peace-enforcing," he said.