

# Develop culture of systematic information collection, says PM

By Syed Nadzri

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has directed government agencies to develop a new culture which stresses on a more systematic information collection and management system.

The Prime Minister said all Malaysians should know how to make full use of accurate and up-to-date information in this age where technological advances have created sophisticated communication systems via satellite.

"There should be continuous efforts to develop a culture which creates a systematic information management system among government agencies. And a research agenda on government data must be planned and implemented to make the Government's information management system more effective," he said when launching the Civil Service Link (CSL), a computerised government information centre.

The CSL, which provides data at the touch of a button, deals with a wide range of information pertaining to

various aspects of public sector administration.

The CSL is currently limited to selected subscribers but by next year it would be available to the public.

The centre, run by the Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit in the Prime Minister's Department, provides information that covers the profile of 140 government agencies including the 25 ministries, regulations, incentives and licensing requirements, and transcripts of 24 laws pertaining to the Civil Service.

It also provides telephone numbers of contact persons, tender advertisements from ministries and statistics on trade and commodities.

Dr Mahathir said the CSL signalled the start to a new era because previously government information and data were kept in many ways and systems — some printed and some computerised.

"Private sector consumers and the public needing information had to deal with all sorts of agencies, hence wasting their time, money and energy," he said.

He expressed the hope

that information provided by the CSL would forever be up-to-date so that it would receive due recognition in the whole region.

Underlining the importance of information exchange between the Government and the private sector, the Prime Minister said such co-operation would certainly improve Malaysia's competitive edge as time and energy could be saved.

"Malaysia will continue to play a prominent role in regional socio-political developments, economics, the environment and technology.

"This means that basic information should be crucial in decision-making so that our involvement will be more effective and meaningful," he added.

Dr Mahathir said the Government was making concerted efforts to create a strong information infrastructure which would steer the country towards excellence.

The CSL, he added, was therefore not only timely but in line with the Government's policy of creating an information-rich society.

Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Ahmad Sarji Abdul Hamid, in his speech, said the services through CSL were available even to those without computer systems since they could use the information kiosks to be established.

Other users, he said, could obtain CSL information by telephone, fax, mail or by coming personally to the CSL office at Wisma PKNS here.

He expressed confidence that the service would be extended to users overseas by the end of next year.

When fully established, the CSL would form an electronic link between government agencies, business community, research and academic institutions and the public.

It comprised an information resource centre which holds a repository of information on government administration and a network of information terminals/kiosks located in public venues for easy access.

"The important thing is that the CSL is customer-oriented in the spirit of Malaysia Incorporated," he added.