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Dr M: Prepare for Malaysia becoming a centre of IT innovations

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ALOR STAR, Thurs. - Malaysia is heading towards becoming a centre for new innovations in view of its rapid development in information technology, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Therefore, he called on the people to be prepared to face the challenges in the new era of information technology.

Dr Mahathir said for the nation to achieve its aspiration of becoming a centre for new innovations, the people should equip themselves and acquire knowledge on IT.

"That's the reason why we are introducing computer lessons in schools because we want our people to master computer technology so that we can become a centre for new innovations," the Prime Minister said when speaking at a reception held for him at the Sultan Abdul Halim airport in Kepala Batas.

Also present at the reception were his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Sanusi Junid and Kedah Barisan Nasional leaders.

The reception was held to congratulate the Prime Minister for his successful mission to the United States and Japan recently to promote the MultiMedia Super Corridor.

Dr Mahathir was here to break fast with staff and students of Universiti Utara Malaysia at its campus in Sintok, about 65km from here.

The Prime Minister said the people should realise that Malaysia had entered the IT era which will change their lives and even working habits.

Malaysians would have access to various information coming from all corners of the world.

"If we do not know how to censor these information, we will face the negative consequences.

"But if we know how to utilise it, it will be useful and we will taste all kinds of successes. That's why we are giving attention to the cyber era," he added.

Dr Mahathir explained how a computer could change the working style of a person and how a job could be accomplished thousands of kilometres from a home station.

"That is why we went on a mission to promote the MultiMedia Super Corridor because we want the investors in information technology to come to Malaysia," he added.

Dr Mahathir also criticised certain quarters who were against the Government's move to establish the MSC.

"Those who oppose the Government's efforts to encourage people to learn about information technology are people who want to see our people become stupid," he said.

Dr Mahathir said how individuals used their computers would depend on the individuals themselves.

"The Government cannot be watching over their shoulders... what they are doing at home or whether they are watching pornographic materials.

"It is up to the individuals and parents to guide themselves and their children to use the computers for educational purposes."

Later, when asked on the proposed cyber laws, Dr Mahathir said the Government needed more time to look into the matter because these laws were new to the country.

"We will inform the public once we finish looking into it," he added.

Earlier, Sanusi, when speaking at the reception, congratulated the Prime Minister for his success in getting foreign experts to sit on the International Advisory Panel on the MSC.

"The Prime Minister's success has become our source of inspiration."

Sanusi said the State Government would establish a university at Pulau Tuba in Langkawi, which would also teach robotics, oceanography and tourism.

Dr Mahathir and his wife also visited the Pekan Rabu where they did some Hari Raya shopping.

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