

26 FEB 1997

Mahathir-Computer

MAHATHIR CONFIDENT MALAYS WILL SUCCEED IN MULTIMEDIA

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 26 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Malays should not have any fears about information technology to the extent of not wanting to master it.

The Prime Minister said he was confident that Malays could succeed in the field if they chose to.

"If from the start, we think we cannot do it, we will not try and with that, we will never learn. I am confident that we can...", he said over RTM's television interview programme "Bersama Perdana Menteri" which focussed on the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC).

The panellists in the 45-minute programme aired tonight were Utusan Melayu group editor-in-chief Johan Jaaffar and New Straits Times assistant group editor Ahmad A. Talib.

Dr Mahathir said many Malay youths had furthered their studies in information technology to advanced level and this proved that Malays could do it.

These youths now work in Hollywood, the film capital of the United States, and were capable of doing things unthought of before, he added.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia must take the opportunity to advance in information technology now when it is still in its developing stage so that the country will not lag behind developed countries.

"If we do not take this opportunity, we will be left behind and it will be difficult for us to catch up," he said.

The Prime minister said the MSC is a window of opportunity for Malaysia to tap the knowledge, resources and wealth of developed countries to boost its own development.

Thus, Malaysia cannot wait for other countries in the region to advance first in the field because once lost, the opportunity will not come by again, he said.

On a warning by an Internet pioneer, Clifford Stoll, in his book "The Silicon Snake Oil" on the abuse of the Internet and the information superhighway, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia would have to be on the alert.

He said every tool had its pros and cons and it was up to the user to decide how best he could benefit from it.

Replying to a question whether the country was ready to take on the information era as many people still do not own a computer, Dr Mahathir said there had to be a start to everything.

In the days of the bullock cart, there were people who purchased cars and now there are cars everywhere, he said.

"A start has to be made. The day will come when everyone will have a computer in his pocket and he will use it with ease," he said.

Dr Mahathir refuted notions that Malays preferred to spend their money for other purposes such as buying extra bracelets for the spouses, extending their homes or changing cars, instead of buying a computer.

"The Malays of today are not like the Malays of the old days. We have changed and so have our culture. We are now capable of doing things which we were unable to do before, and have ventured into and achieved success in many fields."

He expressed confidence that more Malays would be ready to buy computers for use in their homes. -- BERNAMA

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