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Remove mental block regarding IT: Mahathir

ANYONE above 35 years of age who has a fear of the IT (information technology) is actually suffering from mental block.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said during a teleconferencing session attended by some 13,000 people nationwide he is sure the IT fear could be overcome.

Using his experience as a doctor diagnosing an illness, he said: "As a doctor, if we know the cause then it can be cured.

"In this case, those above 35 ... are experiencing a mental block.

"They have this pre-conceived idea that it is impossible for a machine to do everything.

"The young minds, on the converse, accept things more easily as they do not have a mental block. When they use a machine and it can do a lot of things, they accept it. The computer is just a game to them.

"The older generation must remove this mental block. They need to overcome this barrier and force themselves to learn, even a little. If we continue learning then we will understand it," he said.

The Prime Minister was teleconferencing with participants from 28 points nationwide.

The "above-35 fears of IT" question was asked by a participant from Malacca, who wanted to know how to overcome the fear.

Dr Mahathir also gave some step-by-step pointers on using a computer, by first using it as a typewriter and later advancing further into other areas.

"I myself can access only a little. Sometimes when I want to access the e-mail, I access other things instead, but then I try again.

"When I first tried accessing the computer, I forgot the command after a day ... but now I remember it after using it daily."

He asked the older generation not to question the ability of computers but accept the fact that they can contain information if the user is willing to learn.

On his step-by-step learning process, Dr Mahathir said this process will eventually make the computer more user-friendly.

"Programs, for example, need the computer language, and then we use the mouse to access the computer, clicking only the required icon ... sometimes the wrong icon is clicked.

"But later, maybe computer will be able to ask us what we want and we can answer it.

"This might be easier for users. It is the same case for ATM, we want money from the machine, we press the required data.

"If we can use the ATM, we can use the computer," he said.

When asked on the form of action the Government is taking to control information flow into the country, Dr Mahathir said the final decision lies with the individual as it is now a borderless world.

"We are surrounded by various activities - some bad, some good.

"We are exposed to bad and crime but we are not influenced by them because we know they are bad for us.

"Those who are weak will fall for the negative traits.

"Although there are laws in the country, crime is still committed. There are laws against speeding but there are still people caught for speeding," he said.

On a lighter note, the Prime Minister said, the Government cannot be

placing spies in the people's homes to ensure that they do not access negative information that come via the Internet.

"We are not obsessed with IT, but we cannot stop it. It will come anyway anyhow."

A participant from Seremban said that although MSC is well-promoted, many locals are still not clear about its concept. In reply, the Prime Minister said as the technology is available, Malaysians will need to accept the shift to information age.

The MSC, he said, will be used as a test bed to determine what can and cannot be done.

"We need to limit it initially and take it from there. We will need to censor out the negative elements by limiting it to MSC only. But whatever is good and we feel can be done will be implemented nationwide," he said.

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