

Be a Nobel winner, PM urges scientists

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KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has challenged the Malaysian scientific community to produce a Nobel Laureate by the year 2020.

He said the Government remained committed towards promoting science, engineering and technology and had formulated the policy, built the infrastructure and allocated the financial resources.

However, he said beyond that the scientific and industrial community must push it further to innovate and create and to continuously challenge old thinking with new ideas.

"We have to strive for excellence and in the process transform Malaysia into one of the world players in science and technology.

"Having said that, I challenge the Malaysian scientific community to produce a Nobel Laureate by the year 2020," he said in his speech under the theme *Science and Technology*

— the foundation to our economic growth and prosperity during the Academy of Sciences Malaysia annual dinner here last night.

He said Malaysia's technology agenda focused on enhancing efficiency and it had long recognised technology's importance in poverty eradication and reducing environmental problems.

Dr Mahathir also said relevant technologies could be diffused into target groups or community to improve agricultural practices.

On research, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia should develop its own technology and engineering innovations to reduce the cost of technology and even to export it to reverse the flow of royalties paid.

Dr Mahathir said it was important that those in charge of disbursing government funds for research recognised the long payback period of such an endeavour.