

# Science is Islamic, says Mahathir

By MANJEET GILL

KUALALUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad urged Muslims yesterday to 'reawaken' their interest in science and technology so they could progress and compete with the rest of the world.

Over the years, Dr Mahathir said that Muslims had forgotten they had once been masters in the fields of physics, medicine and algebra and thought that such knowledge had been developed by Westerners.

"Early Muslims studied science, developed new technologies and as a

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result of this, they progressed. But over the years there was a movement that such knowledge was irrelevant to Islam.

"Islamic knowledge came to principally connote Islamic laws, and because of this, Muslims gradually lost their knowledge and skills in the sciences," Dr Mahathir said at the launch of the *Langkawi International Islamic Science and Technology Exhibition and Conference* (Listec '98) last night.

Listec '98, which will be held from Oct 8 to 15 in Langkawi, will focus on the relationship between

Islamic and non-Islamic business communities in the science and technology field.

"I hope this exhibition goes some way in clearing the misunderstanding that science is not Islamic and is secular as I am afraid religion will suffer if Muslims have no mastery over this so-called secular subject," said Dr Mahathir.

He added that knowledge should not be restricted to the study of the Quran but include the world around us, the streams, rivers, and rain, "as they form part of science."

Earlier, Kedah Menteri Besar Tan Sri Sanusi Junid, said the event was important "not just because it was being held in Langkawi but because it served to bring Muslim and non-Muslim entrepreneurs, businessmen and manufacturers together by developing smart partnerships between them."

Listec '98, the first exhibition and seminar of its kind, is jointly organised by the Langkawi Accommodation for Visiting Academics, Institute of Islamic Understanding of Malaysia and Eeman Consult (M) Sdn Bhd.