

29/04/1998

PM: Science, technology vital for advancement

Adeline Ong

THE Government is striving to upgrade the people's skills in various fields especially science and technology, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

He said that it will be an improvement if people, particularly Muslims in Malaysia, are skilled in the field of science and technology as this will make them more advanced.

At the same time, Dr Mahathir said, people need to possess confidence and high morals.

"It is no use if a person has skills but is of low morals as this will be self-damaging and hurt the community and the country.

"Even though the country is facing economic pressures, this does not dampen the Government's enthusiasm to develop the nation," he said in his address in the souvenir programme of the Maal Hijrah celebrations.

The Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Ja'afar launched the national level celebrations themed "Country's Wellbeing, Our Responsibility" at the Pusat Islam in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Dr Mahathir also said that developing the country means developing the ummah.

"Developing the ummah is the way to propagate Islam. This cannot be done if Muslims are weak and backward," Dr Mahathir added.

The Government is making efforts to propagate Islam and develop the ummah through education and this has resulted in reductions in the illiteracy rate, poverty and unemployment.

The illiteracy rate in Malaysia at present is 12 per cent, poverty is at 8.9 per cent and the unemployment rate, 2.5 per cent.

"This is why the country has developed quickly and managed to become a commercial centre in this region," he said.

The Prime Minister added that Malaysia has succeeded in reducing the illiteracy rate to lower than 12 per cent, while the global illiteracy rate for Muslims is about 40 per cent.

Dr Mahathir, Cabinet ministers, members of the diplomatic corps and Department of Islamic Advancement director-general Datuk Abdul Hamid Zainal Abidin were among the 1,300 people who attended the celebrations at Pusat Islam.

This year no Maal Hijrah awards were presented.

Bernama reports: In Kelantan, the Sultan advised Muslims to be sincere and united.

A united Muslim community will be able to overcome negative tendencies and be in a position to resolve the economic problems, he said at the Maal Hijrah 1419 celebrations at the Masjid Ismail Petra in Kubang Kerian near Kota Baru.

In Sarawak, Yang Dipertua Negeri Tun Ahmad Zaidi Adruce Muhammaed Noor joined 5,000 Muslims to celebrate the state-level Maal Hijrah at the Masjid Jamek at Petra Jaya near Kuching.

In Perak, Sultan Azlan Shah urged Muslims during the current period of economic turmoil to re-evaluate themselves and recall their past doings.

He said Muslims should draw up strategies and programmes well to ensure that their actions do not worsen the situation.

Each bad occurrence was the result of mistakes of Man itself, he said at the state level Maal Hijrah celebrations in Ipoh.

In Terengganu, the Sultan urged the people to be ready to make

sacrifices for their own well-being and that of the community and nation.

He said this at the state level Maal Hijrah celebrations at the Kolej Ugama Sultan Zainal Abidin (Kusza) in Kuala Terengganu.

The Sultan urged Muslims to further strengthen their unity and be prepared to face the problems and obstacles that might emerge in the new year particularly when the country is facing economic problems.

In practising the Maal Hijrah spirit, any attitude which is not line with Islamic teachings should be discarded, he said when launching the Maal Hijrah celebrations at Wisma Darul Aman in Alor Star.

In Sabah, Yang Dipertua Negeri Tun Sakaran Dandai launched the state level Maal Hijrah celebrations at Wisma Majlis Agama Islam Sabah in Kota Kinabalu.

In Negri Sembilan, Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohd Isa Adul Samad said Muslims must excel in all fields so that they would not be left behind now and in the 21st century.

He said Muslims should free themselves from all forms of colonialism because at present even though many Islamic countries were independent still many more were under the colonial yoke in several areas including the economic sector.

In Johor, Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman urged Muslims to unite to ensure the well-being of the ummah and the country which is facing a difficult economic situation.

(END)