

# Develop R & D to stay ahead, " 3 says Dr M Star 10 SEP 1999 BY LESLIE LAU

BANGI: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday urged Malays to embrace the culture of research and development (R & D) to remain competitive.

"Malays who have the knowledge are not developing it but hiding it, just like the *dukuns* who hide their knowledge about medicines.

"They won't teach everything for fear of the student becoming more knowledgeable than the master," the Prime Minister said at the opening of the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia -- Malaysian Technology Development Corporation Smart Technology Centre here.

Dr Mahathir said the important thing was for the community not to become static but, instead, develop and improve ideas and inventions. "There is no need to hide knowledge or inventions because there are laws to protect them. If it is good, it can be made better," he said.

He also pointed out that most inventions today were a result of R & D conducted by Europeans and these products were not suitable for use in the tropics.

"Passenger cars made in temperate countries can be too hot for the tropics, so maybe some form of insulation can be invented to lower the temperature of the interior," he said.

Dr Mahathir said those involved in R&D were also usually non-Muslims and certain products and facilities such as toilets did not fulfil Islamic practices.

Calling on local companies to strengthen ties with universities to reap profits from R & D, Dr Mahathir said the people must become more "confident of their own abilities."

"Local companies should be prepared to use local research," he added.