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Mahathir-Telecom

MULTI-MEDIA AND TELECOMS TIED TO ECONOMIC GROWTH- DR MAHATHIR

SHAH ALAM, May 19 (bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the prospects for Malaysia's economic growth and progress are tied to its ability to master new telecommunication technologies to dramatically improve its capacities in every field of business, industry and life in general.

The Prime Minister said Malaysia's telecommunciations industry would continue to exert an enormous and dynamic influence on changes in the country.

He said the pervasive influence of new and more advanced technologies as well as the realities of a global infrastructure made it necessary for Malaysia to become an active participant in the world market place.

"The telecommunications industry, I believe, will play a pro-active role in leading and transforming the Malaysian economy into an information based economy of the 21 century," he said when opening the international wireless and telecommunications symposium here.

He also said Malaysia had the prospects and the opportunity to become a major global hub for telecommunications and multi-media services.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia had promoted its telecommunications service industry which was under the control of local entrepreneurs.

As the new millennium dawned, the local telecommunication industry was expected to play a more prominent role in helping to create an informed society as embodied in Vision 2020.

He said among the specific aims of policy initiatives undertaken by the government was to position the country as a competitive telecommunications service provider and a world class markert player.

They included further liberalization of the industry through the introduction of competition in 1990 and the new Communication and Multimedia Act 1998.

The Prime Minister said the challenge faced by the local players was to ensure that they can measure up to foreign competitors.

"The challenge faced by the regulators meanwhile is to ensure that competition will be free without leading to a situation where the country's overall infrastructure development will be compromised," he said.

Dr Mahathir said wireless technologies and the Internet represented the convergence of two of the fastest growing markets as well as developing-technologies in the telecommunications field.

He said the impact of this convergence would see tremendous growth in products with telecommunications, computer, broadcasting and information dissemination being interwoven to deliver cutting-edge audio-visual and multimedia services over a variety of forms.

"It will not be long before the Internet, electronic and voice mail are all available over a mobile cellular phone," he added.

The Prime Minister said the integration of services was the strategic thinking of the future with customers increasingly wanting a breadth of services from a single service provider.

"Instead of having a satellite dish, a TV aerial, a fixed phone line, a mobile phone and another for the Internet all from different service providers, the question that begs to be answered is why not have all these services from one single supplier?" he asked.

The five-day event which started May 17 was organised by Institut Teknologi Mara's Faculty of Electrical Engineering and the Energy,

Communications and Multimedia Ministry.
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