

M'sia pledges firm stand against use of nuclear power

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KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia has pledged its firm stand against the use of nuclear power and expressed hope that other countries would stop building new nuclear power plants.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad likened nuclear power to a malevolent genie, which he said, once released from a

bottle, could never be tamed and put back in again.

The Prime Minister based his distrust of nuclear power on his firm belief that contemporary knowledge and engineering expertise on such a power source was still very primitive.

"We hear of too many accidents. And we know that hav-

ing released the power of nuclear fission we seem quite unable to stop it.

"We try to contain it within layers and layers of cement and lead and other materials, but Chernobyl is still emitting harmful particles which are disseminated over a very wide area," he said.

Chernobyl was a nuclear

plant in Kiev, Ukraine, which exploded in 1986, causing the world's worst nuclear accident.

Dr Mahathir was speaking at a luncheon address at the Sixth Annual Asia Oil and Gas Conference 2001 here.

He said no one could correctly evaluate the level of

damage that could be caused by the disastrous use of nuclear power to the world.

"God forbid that the arsenals of nuclear warheads should ever be fired at anyone. As it is, we don't really know whether they can be defused, or decommissioned or be rendered harmless.

"Malaysia will not use nu-

clear power and we hope others will also not build new nuclear power plants," he added.

He also said that the only renewable non-polluting source of energy was from hydro power which had helped to develop all the industrialised countries in the North years ago.