

All systems go for smartcard

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But phasing out of existing ICs will be gradual: PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues: The implementation of the government multipurpose card (GMPC) will start immediately but the phasing out of existing identity cards will be gradual.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today this cannot be done at once and, as such, will be carried out in stages.

Government departments will be equipped with smartcard readers to ensure smooth implementation of the system.

Mahathir spoke after witnessing a smartcard certification presentation ceremony by Proton World International to Iris Technology and the National Registration Department.

"The implementation can start immediately. The banks are ready, it can be used as a Touch 'n Go card, and can also be used for transactions with government departments."

He said the GMPC now has nine applications but that these can be increased.

The usage of the GMPC will be convenient as one need not carry other cards or money, since it acts as a pre-paid card as well.

Asked about the securi-

ty aspects of the card, Mahathir said it is assured safe by Proton World International.

The card only allows access to services deemed relevant to the individual, and features a pin number and the thumbprint of the

card-holder.

Mahathir said Malaysia needs to be one step ahead in the constantly changing field of technology.

On April 12, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the public can apply

for the GMPC, the first in the world.

On April 26, however, it was reported that the Immigration Department had yet to receive any reading devices for the verification of the thumbprint on the smartcard.