

PM: We need a developed economy

By NICK LEONG **STAR**

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia strives to develop its economy to protect itself and other countries from being manipulated by powerful nations, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

"The Government wants to develop the country not because it wants to "beat its chest" in pride.

"We need to develop our economy and become a developed country so we can continue to fund our forces (in peace missions overseas) even when other countries are unwilling to do so," the

Prime Minister said.

"If we can't fund our forces, we can only sympathise with the victims," he said when launching the book, *Malbat dan Malcon di Bosnia-Herzegovina: Imbasan Kembali*, a pictorial showcase of Malaysia's role with the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the war-torn country during the last decade.

Citing Malaysia's involvement in the Balkan crisis, Dr Mahathir said many countries were forced to pull out of Bosnia-Herzegovina after the UN decided to cut its funding for several governments.

"But we funded ourselves.

We can do that because we have the ability," he said.

Thanking the armed forces for its role in maintaining peace and stability in the country, Dr Mahathir said:

"In order to develop, we need peace. That is why we appreciate the role of the armed forces. When we are safe, the people can contribute and the country can develop."

He hope the armed forces would always live up to their professionalism, guided by the law and the constitution.

Regarding the book, Dr Mahathir said it would be used in schools to educate students

on the contribution made by soldiers and the current generation towards the country's growth.

He lamented that Malaysians did not care much about the history of the country.

Reminding them of the maxim that "those who forget the lessons of history will be punished by repeating the mistakes over and over again" he said:

"If we want to develop, we must be able to look back. If we cannot look back, no matter how developed we are, we will not be able to recognise our achievements."