

Don't delay mastering compu

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Dr Mahathir: It has to be done now or else Malaysians will be

By Ramlan Said and P. Sharmini

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — Malaysians should not wait to have their own computers before learning how to master them and the information technology, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

In facing challenges of globalisation, K-economy and information and communication technology, the Prime Minister said learning about computers and the IT world should not be delayed.

"Do we need to have our own car before we start learning to drive? Of course the answer is no. The knowledge on computers and IT gained today will prove useful later when you have to work with computers and the Internet," he said when launching the Information Technology Literacy Gathering for K-economy at Stadium Putra in Bukit Jalil.

The event, organised by the Human Resources Ministry, is aimed at enhancing awareness on K-economy and the role of ICT in developing the country. It attracted some 1,000 participants.

Speaking to reporters later, Dr Mahathir said he was not happy with the progress made in promoting the use of computers and IT.

"Too many people are just not making any effort to learn how to use computers. We have lots of computers, you cannot wait until you own one before learning. It has to be done now, otherwise, we will be left behind."

When pointed out that some 600 pupils in Gua Musang could not even pay for their examination fees because of poverty, let alone learn about computers, Dr Mahathir said it was unfair to use such cases to portray that "the world is cruel".

"If they cannot pay, arrangements (to help them) can be made. There are many people who want to help. There is no need to create sob stories, as if there are no caring people around.

"In Malaysia, many are prepared to help. So, don't make out as if there is no justice. The Press also have to play their role."

In his speech, Dr Mahathir said all Malaysians should strive to master IT.

"From primary pupils to university undergraduates, from workers to chief executives, housewives, farmers and fishermen, they must be able to understand IT and multimedia, and how to communicate using electronic technology and computers."

In attaining K-economy, he said the most

important factor was human resource — talent, skills, creativity and the commitment of people. In this aspect, machines and computers cannot replace human beings.

"The Government has implemented various comprehensive programmes to develop its human resource. Every year, the highest allocations are given to education and training while the facilities and services are continuously upgraded.

"The contents of education and training programmes are updated to meet current needs," he said, arguing that Malaysians should grab all opportunities provided to progress.

Dr Mahathir said Japan and the Nordic countries were proof of how knowledge could help them succeed.

They had to import most of the raw materials but with the technology and knowledge acquired, they were able to manufacture value-added products for exports.

As for Malaysia which had rich natural resources, he said the country's revenues would not increase if there were no efforts to produce value-added products.