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Mahathir-IT

GAINS FROM IT REVOLUTION ONLY POSSIBLE WITH ADEQUATE KNOWLEDGE

KOTA BAHARU, July 20 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahatir Mohamad said today that Malaysians can only reap the benefits accruing from the information technology revolution if they acquire adequate knowledge.

The Prime Minister said if Malaysians do not acquire and master enough general knowledge, then the country could miss out on many opportunities as it did during the industrial revolution 200 years ago.

"Today we are facing another big revolution that is the information technology revolution. If we master information technology we will be able to benefit from the revolution," he said when opening the IT Literacy Programme 2001 at Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Kubang Kerian 2 here today.

Taking the cue from the industrial revolution 200 years ago, the Prime Minister said Europe empowered itself with knowledge which helped it produce quality goods using automation while poor countries continued to be left behind and ended up becoming consumers.

Dr Mahathir said the government wanted the people to equip themselves with sufficient knowledge in information technology so that they can compete with the rest of the developed world.

He said the effort taken today to equip Malaysians with information technology knowledge would result in the country becoming a producer of IT-based goods for the export market.

Dr Mahathir added that being IT literate would also help Malaysians obtain information from around the world within minutes.

The Prime Minister said the government was placing great emphasis on students mastering and acquiring information technology.

He also said the corporate sector should come forward and help students become IT savvy by equipping computer laboratories in schools.

"The question now is do they want to learn?, If they do not wish to learn then all the laboratories and equipment will go to waste," the Prime Minister said.

Dr Mahathir said since the country cannot avoid the information technology revolution, teachers, especially Malay teachers should become IT literate and effectively pass on the knowledge to students and make them the IT literate generation of the future.

He added that everything would be lost if teachers ignored IT knowledge and placed emphasis on other disciplines which would not benefit students.

"They should not be misguided with misleading teachings or else they will become not good human beings," he said.

Dr Mahathir added that teachers had a noble position in society because of the knowledge they imparted but they should not allow themselves to be influenced by undesirable elements and lose society's respect.

The Prime Minister said acquiring knowledge, especially IT knowledge was advocated by Islam and it would be very unfortunate if people claim it as being materialistic.

He said without knowledge Muslims would continue to be manipulated as was the case in some Islamic countries now.

With general knowledge, Muslims can among others, invent equipment to protect themselves and the country from enemy threat.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister witnessed the signing of three memorandum of understandings (MOUs) for the smart school project including the setting up of computer laboratories in smart schools nationwide.

The first MOU was signed between United Multimedia Sdn Bhd (UMM), KUB

Telekomunikasi Sdn Bhd, Sun Microsystems, Cisco Systems, Vads Bhd and the Apex Communications Group.

This was followed by an MOU between UMM and Telekom Smart School Sdn Bhd; and between KUB Tekstil Sdn Bhd and Kurnia Insurans (M) Bhd.

Also present was the Prime Minister's wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamad Ali, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Education Datuk Mahadzir Mohd Khir, KUB chairman Datuk Hassan Harun and Umno Kelantan Information Chief Datuk Mustapa Mohamed.

-- BERNAMA

BD DVS