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Technology for right interpretation of Islam

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - Muslims should take advantage of technological advancement capable of providing them with the right interpretation of Islam, thus strengthening their understanding of their religion.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the recent availability of Quran in palmtop form would further encourage Muslims to embrace the true teachings of Islam.

"This is a tremendous technological advancement. It seems that the electronic Quran is much better than the ordinary Quran as it provides translations of Quranic phrases, in both English and Arabic.

"This will lead to a better understanding of the religion among Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

"Wrong interpretation of Islam among Muslims has resulted in Muslims becoming backward and take it in their stride to venge their anger on the world," he said, noting the irony of how the Sept 11 terrorist attack on the United States had sparked curiosity among non-Muslims to learn about Islam.

Dr Mahathir was speaking at the launch of the Al-Murshid (digital Al-Quran) and the Islamic Research Centre (IRC) at the Malaysian Islamic Art Museum today.

Al-Murshid combines the Compaq iPAQ pocket personal computer technology with the software designed and developed by Frazer-Nash Research in association with the IRC.

It features complete interactive audio recital of the Holy Quran by the celebrated Sheik Mohamed Gebril with the option to select and play any surah.

Other prominent features of Al-Murshid include:

- * prayer-time and Hijrah date calculator for any of over 1,700 cities around the world. Astronomical computations will ensure the accuracy of Adhan worldwide;

- * Display of the Qiblat using a graphical compass representation, which enables the finding of a true direction to Mecca from anywhere in the world; and,

- * Multi-timezone clock functions and display of prayer.

Speaking to reporters later, Dr Mahathir said misinterpretation of Islamic teaching was rampant, especially among Muslim countries.

"The Government has to correct the wrong teaching of Islam because children in the madrasahs and pondoks are taught to hate and fight the Government.

"This is a problem of all Muslim countries. They can never be stable or develop because everytime they try to develop, there are people who try to destabilise the country or overthrow the government.

"The people will be preoccupied with fighting among themselves."

(END)