

Knowledge key to progress

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Govt and people should cooperate to enhance development

KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday it is important for Malaysian workers to acquire knowledge to face the globalisation era and bring greater development to the country.

"Knowledge is important in a human civilisation and if it is not acquired, the country will not progress. In fact, it will be colonised by foreigners.

"When we are knowledgeable, our decisions will be more rational and be in the interests of all parties, the government, employers and employees," he said at a Workers' Day rally for public sector workers at the National Institute of Public Admi-

nistration (Intan).

The theme for the celebration was "Knowledgeable Workers Make for a Progressive Nation".

Mahathir said Malaysians should spare no efforts to acquire knowledge, and in this world of globalisation workers should be careful if they did not want to see the country's independence and people's dignity undermined.

"This is what we want to avoid and all parties should understand that the government makes decisions after considering their interests," he said.

He said workers possessed a powerful and an effective weapon as they could resort to strikes to pressure the gov-

ernment for their own benefit.

"It is clear that the weapon given to workers is very powerful and effective but a weapon is only good if it is put to good use and not otherwise," he said.

Mahathir said workers, employers and the government should cooperate as they depend on one another to develop the country.

He said they should not make decisions based on emotions, out of anger, racial considerations or adopt a confrontational attitude as such methods will not be fruitful.

The prime minister said all three parties have important roles to play in develop-

ing the country and the fruits of their endeavours should be fairly distributed among themselves.

On globalisation, Mahathir said in this era, certain quarters had used capital as a weapon to conquer the world, and in the process they had forced developing countries to pawn their independence.

"When capital comes in, it is good but when it leaves, the country is crippled and faces difficulties ... this happened to Malaysia in 1997.

"We lost US\$250 billion (RM950 billion) and they thought we should not stop them. When we stopped them, they criticised us," he said.