

PM: Pursue information technology as a way of life

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. Malaysians who were left behind in the industrial revolution which benefited many should now aggressively pursue information technology as a way of life in order to achieve international success.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said more importantly, Malaysians, especially the Malays, must be able to keep an open mind and pull themselves out of the negative mindset that they are weak and incapable of taking the lead in various fields.

“Two hundred years ago, we missed the industrial revolution because we were co-

lonialised and we had little knowledge,” he said.

“But today in the era of IT revolution we are somewhat on a level playing field and we can master information technology, even lead the way if there is a will . . . a will to learn.”

The Prime Minister said the future of Malaysia as a nation and the Malays as a race depended much on how well the community, especially the younger generation, adapted to the new maxim.

“All humans have similar brains but what determines one to be better than the other is knowledge, and to attain knowledge we must not have a ‘mind block’, particularly to things which are new to us,” he said.

Dr Mahathir was addressing more than 1,000 participants of the *Handling The K-Economy Challenges: The Role of the Younger Generation Towards the Information Communications Technology Culture* seminar which was organised by Umno Youth.

The Prime Minister gave an assurance that in facing challenges in the era of IT revolution, Malaysia would not face a physical digital divide as the Government had taken the necessary steps to provide adequate facilities.

He, however, warned that negative mindsets, especially the rejection of new ideas and applications in life by the older generation, could hinder the national agenda.

“There are many ‘Berlin Walls’ within us.

‘Mind block’ is the greatest hurdle in our approach towards competence in this new era of information technology,” he said.

Dr Mahathir commended the younger generation for confidently adapting to IT and other related advancements in a positive manner and added that an enormous amount of confidence, hardwork and a strong resolve to succeed was necessary not only in IT but also in any other undertakings.

“If there is a need to adopt new cultures then we must do so as long as it is for the common benefit of all,” he said, adding that those who were only good at criticising the initiatives taken by others will

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never progress.

Touching on the so-called champions of the Malay language who often criticised anything that was not in "Bahasa Kebangsaan", Dr Mahathir said such individuals or groups should put things in perspective before embarking on their struggle.

"You cannot be a true nationalist by only championing the language, we need to strive for total development.

"We should be fanatical about the total development of our race and not confine ourselves to the language alone. . . . no doubt we have to develop our language but there are many other things we must master too."

Dr Mahathir said at a Press conference that the Government would introduce an innovative information communication technology method of teaching in schools whereby the lessons would be transmitted via a central processor.

He said under the system, teachers would merely act as facilitators. "The shortage of expertise in developing these lessons has delayed us but we will be there soon.

"Learning English, for example, would be made easier, even if the teachers are not well-versed in the language, as students will only have to see, listen and practise to master the language," he said.

Present at the function today were Umno secretary general Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob and Umno Youth chief **Datuk** Hishammuddin Tun Hussein.