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Mahathir-English

DR MAHATHIR WANTS STUDENTS TO MASTER ENGLISH

By: Salmy Hashim

WASHINGTON, May 16 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Wednesday urged Malaysian students to master English so that they can not only communicate with foreigners but also surf the internet and keep up with the latest developments in engineering and science.

"It will be impossible to translate all the latest English texts into Malay and instead of waiting for the texts to be translated into Malay anyone who knows the language can have immediate access to the latest in Engineering and Science."

Addressing more than 160 students from around the United States at the new Malaysian Embassy here, the Prime Minister advised students overseas to stay away from misguided militants or extremist groups whose main goal was to overthrow the government through violent means.

"I don't understand why they want to use arms when they can use elections to choose the government of their choice."

Dr Mahathir reminded students of the "Malaysia Boleh" slogan and of the challenges ahead as the country worked towards becoming a developed nation by the year 2020.

He was proud of the achievements of Malaysians in scaling Mt Everest, sailing around the world, and "of someone who has gone to the Antarctica."

His last remark was met with laughter and applause from students who recalled the Prime Minister's gruelling adventure in the South Pole recently.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir opened the new chancery of the Embassy of Malaysia at No 3516 International Court. The building, completed in February, is built on the style of the "Anglo-Straits," a blend of Malay and colonial British architecture.

Opening the new embassy building, he said the task of the embassy and its staff included immediately detecting "incipient changes in perceptions and opinions so as to be able to correct them early."

Dr Mahathir said as Washington was the seat of the most powerful government, it was important for Malaysia to be able to gauge what effect media reports had on the attitudes or perceptions of the decision-makers in Washington.

"This places a great responsibility on the embassy and its staff to gather information for our government and to advise us on what should be the appropriate action or reaction on our part," he said.

Dr Mahathir ended his three-day official visit to Washington at the invitation of President George W. Bush, on Wednesday. The two leaders met on Tuesday to discuss terrorism, the problems in West Asia and bilateral issues.

The Prime Minister also held talks with members of the Bush Administration during his stay at the historic Blair House and they included US Vice-President Richard Cheney, National Security Adviser, Condoleeza Rice, US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick, Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Federal Reserve Board Chairman, Alan Greenspan.

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