

31/08/2002

'Hunger for success drives innovation, creativity'

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - Young entrepreneurs in the ICT and bio-technology sectors must hunger for success and not merely possess the relevant educational qualifications.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said it was this hunger that would drive new ideas that were innovative and creative.

"To our young Malaysians out there I say, 'You need to be daring enough to push the limits of the envelope, to go beyond the horizon. You just might discover something new that can do the nation proud'".

Launching Malaysia Debt Ventures Berhad at Bangunan Bank Industri, the Prime Minister said entrepreneurs must also be willing to face failures and setbacks.

"Malaysia's success in the ICT sector and the emerging biotechnology sector will depend on the cravings for challenges that reside within our local entrepreneurs.

"They are the reason why we established the Multimedia Super Corridor, a project for the future which will benefit the future generation most of all."

While Malaysians celebrate the 45th year of Independence from colonial rule, Dr Mahathir said young Malaysians born in the freedom and prosperity of an independent Malaysia have been fortunate.

"They have grown up in a free country - free from colonial rule, free from fear, free from hunger, free from ignorance and free from humiliation. These young Malaysians can now walk with their head held high, facing the world with dignity."

Dr Mahathir said the nation had learnt much from the experience of the MSC and impending development of the Bio-Valley, and he was confident Malaysia was well on its way towards bridging the international information and digital divide.

He also said the emphasis placed on ICT, and now biotechnology, was not decided upon by the Government arbitrarily, and every year it allocated a substantial amount towards the ICT development. "In the Eighth Malaysia Plan, a total of RM7 billion has been allocated for the sector," said Dr Mahathir.

However, financing was a major hurdle for local enterprises.

"We realise that for this sector to grow, the local financial industry must also respond proactively."

"We realise that traditional financial institutions including banks and venture capital firms are working at their own pace in providing the financial support required.

"With the setting up of MDV, armed with the RM1.6 billion loan facility provided by the Government of Japan, those companies, which successfully secure high value-added ICT businesses and contracts, can now access this ample fund and grow at a much faster pace."

Dr Mahathir said the commitment to good relations between Malaysia and Japan was most timely, adding that Japan's generous helping hand came at a time when the global economic outlook was uncertain.

"We are grateful the Japanese Government, through the Japan Bank for International Co-operation, has given us this loan agreement."

Malaysians, he said, have always admired the Japanese spirit of innovation. "Never before has this spirit been more needed than in the field of ICT and, more recently, in the life sciences and biotechnology.

"This can only happen in an atmosphere of global peace and economic stability."

Confident that the user-friendly financing facility offered by MDV would help entrepreneurs achieve success, Dr Mahathir said it would not only provide an alternative source of financing, but complement those offered by banks and venture capitals.

"Collateral to secure a loan is flexible and only requires contracts, personal or corporate guarantees, letter of credit, intellectual property rights and assignment of receivables."

The Prime Minister hoped MDV and the recipients of the fund would take full responsibility and be accountable for the management and use of the fund.

Stressing that maintaining transparency and professionalism were important, Dr Mahathir said success did not come easy on a silver platter, but could only be achieved through hard work and perserverance.

"The good news is that MDV also aims to transfer knowledge to local financial institutions and ICT companies to enable them to be self sustaining.

"As an active financial institution, it is my hope that MDV will venture beyond giving out loans but also seek out companies in need of financing as well as initiate ICT projects in the public and private sectors," he said.