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PM: Be creative and innovative

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SERI KEMBANGAN, Tues. - Malaysians need to become creative and innovative, and not be mere followers of new developments in the world today, especially in the field of Information Technology, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said creativity and innovation would only surface if research and development is embraced as a culture and pursued with the intention to improve things which were already in front of people.

"It is only a matter of culture and mindset, we could be better if we embrace Research and Development as a culture and continuously find ways and means to improve.

"If we set our minds to understand the process of research and development, then we can achieve. We must tell ourselves to improve the things that we have. We are living in an exciting age and there seems to be no limit to human ingenuity," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Finance Minister, made the remarks in his speech at the Malaysian Industry-Government Group for High Technology (MIGHT) annual briefing at the Palace of the Golden Horses here this afternoon.

The Prime Minister reiterated that Malaysians could be as good as any other "IT superpower" nations in the world if greater emphasis was placed on research and development, particularly by the private sector.

Dr Mahathir said that Malaysia has had the opportunity to begin at the same time as other developed countries in the IT Revolution now, unlike during the Industrial Revolution when Malaysia could only watch the developments.

"We were a colony then, we were unable to participate in the Industrial Revolution, we were merely the recipient. But today, in IT, we have the opportunity to start together with everybody else (and) therefore we should be able at least to keep up with the rest or even if we are behind, we cannot be far behind," he said.

Stressing that confidence and a quest to improve as the main ingredients for success, he said Malaysians must learn to adjust to the prevailing environment.

Dr Mahathir said that if humans had been satisfied with ladders, the present generation could not possibly be enjoying escalators and lifts as no one would have invested to further improve the basic wooden ladder.

"Some people, some cultures, some races seem to be capable of doing a lot of research and then developing the results, while others seem incapable and are mere consumers of the technology."

"This has nothing to do with creed or colour, it is just the culture and mind-set," he added.

Dr Mahathir said the private sector could apply this positive culture and further develop the aerospace, automotive, ICT and manufacturing industries.

Also present were MIGHT Joint chairmen Tan Sri Dr Ahmad Zaharudin Idrus and Tan Sri Dr Ahmad Tajuddin Ali, and MIGHT president and chief executive officer Datuk Dr Ahmed Tasir Lopie Pihie.