

Move into life sciences, says PM

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KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysians should utilise latest developments in life sciences to seek new findings in battling emerging diseases.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the research conducted could be used to find cures for life-threatening illnesses, such as the recent SARS.

He said Malaysia must not slack in research and development of biotechnology as many foreign experts, such as those from Japan, were interested to

reap profits from researches in the country's rich biodiversity.

Dr Mahathir told the 200-odd guests at the Imperial College Alumni Association Malaysia's dinner here last night that the Government was always prepared to provide resources and infrastructure for research and training to assist locals.

He said because of this, the country had progressed from industrialisation to the development of information technology, and research and development of its biodiversity.

"If the country lacks qualified

experts, the Government will encourage foreign scientists to come here and collaborate with their local counterparts. But it is vital for Malaysia to build up its core of qualified scientists so that we can be ahead of others in certain fields," he said.

Also present were his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali and association president Dr Foo Ban Nyen.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysian students in foreign universities should take up courses in life sciences and return to work in the same field to benefit the country.