

Dr M: Catch up on industrial excellence

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by Ng Kee Seng
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

PUTRAJAYA: Islamic countries must stop crying over spilt milk and start striving for industrial and trading excellence.

"We have to strive to catch up because Islam is not only about religion but also trade," Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

"We should not be left behind and it is also not about dominance. Muslims have the industrial capacity and trading abilities (to catch up)."

Opening the maiden six-day Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) expo here, he said there was a time when certain Muslims misinterpreted the Quran and preached that electricity should not be used in mosques because it was not an Islamic invention.

"It is ridiculous to hold such interpretations today," he said.

Mahathir said "we have also lost many brains because we cannot pay enough. Therefore, there is no advancement in inventions.

Addressing the foreign ministers from the 57-member OIC nations, he said: "We are not second class in any way. We must be able to stand up and defend ourselves.

"Here, we say *Malaysia Boleh* (Malaysia can do it). There is no reason why Muslims cannot do it."

Mahathir said the first and historic OIC Expo was

organised to show that Muslims are as capable as anyone else to manufacture and produce goods for world consumption.

More than 400 exhibitors from 35 OIC countries are participating in the exposition in Putrajaya's Precinct 5.

At the launching of Takaful Ikhlas (an Islamic insurance product) at the

same venue later, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Syed Albar said the expo was to stimulate more exclusive trade opportunities among Islamic nations.

"Currently, only two per cent of the total trade of the world is done among Islamic countries. You can imagine the very big potential for growth," he said.

