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Dr M: IT makes knowledge quest easier

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TRONOH, Thurs. - Newly-appointed chancellor of Universiti Teknologi Petronas, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, said today the advancement in information technology has made the quest for knowledge much easier and that anyone could become an expert in any chosen field.

There was no reason for anyone to be left behind in the process of acquiring knowledge as the present technology had enabled them to understand even Einstein's theory of relativity in just a few days, he said.

"Accessible information stored in the Internet is enormous. If a microchip can store information from a set of encyclopaedia, just imagine what we can get from computers which have high numbers of these microchips," he said in his acceptance speech as UTP chancellor at a convocation at the university's main hall.

Dr Mahathir is the second UTP chancellor after the late Raja Tun Mohar Raja Badiozaman who died on June 8, last year.

The former Prime Minister said the people must grab the opportunity to master knowledge as it could help bring them to a higher level of civilisation.

"The opportunity is wide open and please do not let the narrow-minded people stop us."

He said people in Malaysia were fortunate as there were 17 public universities and dozens of private institutions of higher learning where they could pursue their studies.

"Education could help improve one's living standard and will eventually contribute to the success of the community and nation. A successful nation will then create a higher level of civilisation which will benefit the people," he said.

He said the setting up of UTP itself was significant as it had allowed local and foreign students to master the knowledge and technology related to the petroleum industry.

He said many countries, which were bestowed with natural resources including petroleum, did not have the knowledge and technology and, therefore, depended on others to exploit such resources.

"We are lucky because we do not take the easy way out by allowing others to extract our petroleum and only take the sales commission," he said.

Malaysia has, instead, opted for a smarter solution by encouraging its people to master the knowledge and technology in the relevant fields.

"Although our oil reserves are quite small, our approach has enabled us to become one of the main players in the industry," said Dr Mahathir, who is also Petronas adviser.

At the function, Dr Mahathir was conferred an honorary doctorate in engineering and technology by the university.

He received the award from UTP pro-chancellor Tan Sri Azizan Zainul Abidin.

Present were Dr Mahathir's wife, Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Tajol Rosli Ghazali, UTP pro-chancellor Tan Sri Mohd Hassan Marican and UTP rector Dr Rosti Saruwono.