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Raising performance in digital arena

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AT the risk of sounding like a broken record, I feel the need to put down my two sen worth in wishing former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad a fond farewell. There are not enough superlatives to describe his abilities in transforming the country into a knowledge-based economy (k-economy). The changing of guard should revitalise everyone into moving forward and proving to the world we can achieve more under the leadership of Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Computer awareness is slowly but surely picking up among all ages. There is no turning back from the information technology (IT) revolution. We will have to equip ourselves to ride with it.

The Internet penetration rate might still be low but we are slowly clawing our way. Telecommunication companies have come up with different packages to suit a wide range of needs. Competition among our broadband service providers is heating up.

Across the nation, cybercafes and Internet centres are mushrooming. With these centres that provide cutting-edge technology, IT awareness is bound to rise at a steady rate. For just RM3, users can go online using state-of-the-art computers connected at speedy broadband connection.

Youngsters are particularly hooked on the Internet, and this is a good thing. Since the online lingua franca is English, there is no doubt that we will see an improvement in usage of the language. This is also in line with the Government's plan to expand the use of English in order to compete with other nations. Online users are also able to mature faster as they are exposed to global community.

Play is one of our human characteristics, and in the digital world, we should be proud of our performances in the World CyberGames Challenge the past three years. Granted, we have suffered a setback in this year's competition with some rather lacklustre performances but there is nothing to be ashamed of. This could be due to the dearth of competitions and tournaments because the gaming community has seemingly reached a psychological plateau.

Effective steps need to be taken to ensure that the same scenario will not be repeated in the future. Tournament organisers should place quality and performance of players before profit. The initial sacrifice in profit should not deter organisers from doing their best to produce world-class cyber athletes.

We have consistently rubbed shoulders with the world's best, but there still is a lot of work to be done. As the infrastructure is being laid down across our country to raise up the next batch of cyber athletes, there will be no shortage of volunteers to represent Malaysia on the international stage.

Big name sponsors such as Microsoft and Samsung have already pledged their support to this cause, and we will do our utmost best not to disappoint the faith placed on our shoulders.