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`Education the key to success'

reports on "International Conference of Muslim Young Leaders 2003" by THE success of Muslims In Malaysia is due to their education and their consequent capacity for self-improvement, Deputy Education Minister Datuk Abdul Aziz Shamsudin said yesterday at the conference.

Education played a key role in creating and shaping a country's future. The leaders of this country had realised that early and worked hard to ensure the people kept pace.

"We would not be where we are today if we did not place importance on education after we had achieved independence," he said, presenting a paper entitled "Education - Muslim Tradition of Excellence".

"When we achieved independence 46 years ago there were only 11 Muslim doctors, including Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his wife Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali. Today, the number has leapt to 4,200," he said.

In other fields too, the number of educated people had gone up many-fold since independence.

He said the Muslims in the country went through many tribulations to pursue education after being colonised for 460 years by the Portuguese, Dutch, British and Japanese. Their persistence had finally paid off.

Muslim countries needed to move forward to embrace changes in science and technology if they wanted to stay competitive in the new world.

"Don't tell me you would want to move around on camels when there are cars and aircraft," he said.

"Education must be for the betterment of one's life, and it is the parents' responsibility to ensure that Muslim values are instilled in children and not lost with modernisation," he added.