

10,000 thinkers wanted

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PM: Nation should create new breed of intellectuals

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia should create an *Ulu Al-Bab* community of between 5,000 and 10,000 scholars and thinkers in science and technology by 2020 to ensure the nation's success.

"These are the groups who will be playing a major role in towards the development of the people and the nation as well as contributing to mankind," said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

He said the creation of such a community should be part of the country's social development plan.

"This should be our aspiration," he said when launching the Scientific Excellence in Islamic Civilisation: Islamic Science Ahead of its Time exhibition at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre here yesterday.

In defining *Ulu Al-Bab*, he said it was a community of scholars and thinkers who could analyse natural occurrences and use natural greatness for development purposes.

Abdullah urged Muslims to acquire knowledge and aspire to learn science and technology.

"An inclination towards science and technology can bring about success to Muslims. They should come up with their own inventions to improve their lives," he said.

He said Muslim countries were still weak in *fardhu kifayah* (social obligation as advocated by Islam).

"None of the Muslim countries are

in the developed world. It is disheartening that Muslims are regarded as troublemakers, terrorists, unproductive, weak, easily misled and oppressed.

"We need to find ways to improve, and the only way to do so is through knowledge acquisition," he said.

On the exhibition, Abdullah hoped it would enable people to understand the meaning and role of science and technology in their lives.

The exhibition was brought by Prof Dr Fuat Sezgin, the founding director of the Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic Science at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt, Germany.

Abdullah presented an honorary doctorate of science scroll to Dr Fuat from Universiti Teknologi Malaysia where the Prof Dr Fuat Sezgin Chair will be set up.

The exhibition at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre is open to the public from 10am to 10pm until Jan 14. Entrance is free. It will then be held at the National Science Centre from Jan 23 to March 31.



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