

# 'Turn mosques into wellspring of knowledge'

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Mosques have to move with the times and have foreign language classes, promote the use of computers and transform into knowledge-based institutions.

Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said mosques should be turned into resource centres, reminiscent of mosques in the golden age of Islam, where Islamic scholars had used the institution as a place to disseminate knowledge.

The prime minister hoped that the muezzin's call to prayer, the clicking of computer keyboards and the chatter of foreign languages at mosques could become a reality in the future.

"The Prophet had built the first mosque, the Quba Mosque, which was where *dakwah* (disseminating the message of Islam) was conducted and knowledge was spread.

"History also shows that the arrival of Islam in Andalusia opened up a gateway to all kinds of knowledge and civilisations through the mosque," he said at the opening of the Nation-

al Hadhari Community Convention here yesterday.

His speech was read out by Federal Territories Minister Datuk Zulhasnan Rafique.

Abdullah said educational centres needed to think of ways to help transform the institution of the mosques, such as providing modern facilities and infrastructure for teachers and students.

"The mosque also has to be in line with modern times, by offering classes in foreign languages and computer classes on general knowledge or entrepreneurship to the community.

"It is also one way to pull the younger generation into mosques," he said.

Abdullah said the Muslim community would not return to glory just by moaning about their failures or only recalling past successes, as it was their present actions that counted.

Many Islamic countries had been blessed with rich natural resources such as oil, he said, and Malaysia had acted upon its good fortune by producing its own oil as well as conducting oil exploration efforts in other countries, such as on the African continent.