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# Dr M: Imbue human values in science



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KUALA LUMPUR: Former prime minister Tim Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the lack of a humanities-based value system in the advancement of science and technology is blocking the world from attaining full civilisation.

This was because the black side of science and technology had contributed to killing, maiming and destruction of humanity.

"The superpowers of the world have 30,000 nuclear warheads with the potential to totally annihilate the whole world.

"The abuse of science and technology has also resulted in billions and trillions being spent to find more efficient ways to kill people."

Dr Mahathir was speaking at the opening of the World Engineering, Science and Technology Congress organised by Universiti Teknologi Petronas (UTP) here yesterday.

"There is a need for us to be guided by better values... more human values on why we teach science and technology and how we can prevent its abuse," he said.

"We should inculcate in the minds of people to stop destroying and build, prolong human life and create more cities — towards making this world a more civilised one."

Dr Mahathir, who is the chancellor of UTP, said the present value system of the world condemned capital punishment for an individual found guilty of murder but at the same time, let leaders who order the killing of thousands to go scot-free.

Speaking to reporters later, he said in his long tenure as prime minister, he had ensured that all development projects, such as the building of the Kuala Lumpur International Airport and management of the country's primary forests, were done with sustainability in

mind.

He said: "Before building KLIA, we had the bad experience of moving to Subang thinking that air travel will not grow very much. We thought we would be handling 400,000 passengers a year in Subang but by the time we moved away from there we were handling 14 million passengers.

"For the KLIA, we reserved 25,000 acres (10,117.25ha) suitable for handling eventually 125 million passengers annually, a target which may take 100 years to achieve."

On the preservation of primary forests, he said Malaysia still had 50 per cent of its land covered by forests compared with developed countries which had practically none.

"The developed countries have cut down all their forests but now they are telling us we cannot cut down our forests. They threaten that if we do so, they are not going to buy our palm oil.

"We need living space, so for people to tell us we cannot cut our forests is to ask a country, relatively poor, to sacrifice because others have wiped out their forests.

"That is not fair. We have to make a living. We are careful but we need to expand, get some benefit from having land. If land cannot be developed at all, what do we do?" he asked.

On the 10th Malaysia Plan unveiled last week, Dr Mahathir said: "I believe it is an improvement on the New Economic Model."

On Israel's move to set up an independent public commission to investigate its assault on a Gaza-bound aid flotilla, he asked: "How can Israel do this? It's like a murderer... going on trial with himself as judge and he found himself not guilty. That's what Israel is doing. They kill people and have a judgment over their own killing. If we have that system we will have no justice."