

**Wealth Does Not Guarantee Malaysia Will Become A Developed Nation – Dr Mahathir
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MELAKA, May 19 (Bernama) -- Wealth alone will not ensure Malaysia will become a developed nation but on the other hand more people in the country must master knowledge to make the vision to become a developed nation a reality, said former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said without mastering knowledge, factors such as high income of the people, natural resources and many skyscrapers would be meaningless in Malaysia's effort to become a developed nation.

He said Malaysia needed citizens who were capable of mastering knowledge in science, technology and mathematics, fields which were regarded as the backbone in the development of a nation, currently.

"We must look at countries like China, South Korea and Japan which were backward and isolated but were able to to develop their countries when many of their people mastered knowledge especially in science, technology and mathmetics," he said.

Dr Mahathir said this at the Chancellor's Talk progamme at Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka (UTeM) which was also attended by Melaka Yang di-Pertua Negeri Tun Mohd Khalil Yaakob, Melaka Chief Minister Datuk Seri Idris Haron and UTeM) Vice Chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Ahmad Yusoff Hassan.

Dr Mahathir said mastery of knowledge would also produce more new knowledge and technology which were important catalysts in the development of a country.

He said the government had long realised the importance of mastery of knowledge when it allocated at least 25 percent of the national expenditure each year for the education sector, an in fact, 600,000 of the 1.4 million civil servants nationwide were teachers.

"The government's realisation is not enough if there is no awareness among the people. Regardless, the current reality is that high level knowledge is controlled by the western nations and as such effort to get the knowledge from them must be done especially from among our populace," he said.

As such, he said it was crucial that the people mastered the languages used by the western countries among which is the English Language to seek knowledge to develop the nation.

"Learning the English Language does not mean rejecting Bahasa Malaysia or turning us into westerners, only that the language is the gateway to knowledge. No use of us having gold no matter how much underneath our house if we lack the know-how to extract it," he said.

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