

'VARSITIES AND INDUSTRY MUST WORK HAND-IN-HAND' 143

Don't train work force of square pegs: Dr M

N.S.T. - 5 MAR 1980

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today urged those involved in research and the development of industry, expertise and skills to start preparing to train a work force directly relevant to Malaysia's development.

The Deputy Prime Minister warned that Malaysia could no longer afford the luxury of allowing such development to take an independent and haphazard course.

"We cannot place ourselves in the position where the skills and requirements of a modern developing Malaysia may turn into problems later on," he added.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir was speaking

at the opening of the "National Workshop On Co-operation Among Industries, Research Institutions And Universities" here.

The workshop is being jointly sponsored by the Malaysian Industrial Development Authority (Mida) and Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.

Emphasis

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was broadening the range of her industrial activities and making efforts to turn the country into a centre for the manufacture of products based upon her natural resources.

Apart from making the 1980s the decade of resource-based industries, Malaysia was

also entering the field of heavy industry.

"As such, our emphasis will not only be on the development of the less developed rural areas and States.

"We will also widen and upgrade the technological base of our industrial sector," he added.

Turning the country's raw materials into sophisticated finished and semi-finished products required new technology and skills — both in management and production.

It was within this framework, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said, that increased co-operation between industry, research organisations and universities was of paramount importance.

Universities and in-

dustry could not work in isolation.

For instance, if industry created jobs which required skills and expertise not to be found in Malaysia, industrialisation would not benefit the nation fully.

Right role

On the other hand, if universities produced graduates and diploma holders who could find no place in development, it could lead to serious discontent among the educated youth, apart from being a waste of the country's assets.

"If all the agencies involved co-operate fully, we can be sure that our efforts to make the 1980s a decade for the development of resource-based and heavy industries will

be a success," added the Deputy Prime Minister.

At the moment, research organisations might not be able to play a meaningful role in heavy industry and engineering technology, but they could contribute a lot to resource-based industries.

He urged researchers to concentrate on the conditions peculiar to Malaysia and identify new applications for the country's resources.

"It is here that industry can indicate to our researchers the most fruitful areas for research," he said.

Researchers too, should concentrate on areas that would be of direct benefit to the country.

Dialogue

They should not undertake research purely for the sake of research.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir suggested that industry, research institutions and universities set up permanent consultative committees to ensure a continuing dialogue.

He also called on banks and financial institutions to help the Government implement its plans to develop resource-based industries.

Earlier, Mida chairman Datuk Jamil Jan said an important area for local researchers was to find ways and means of adapting "imported" technology to local conditions.

Later on, research organisations and universities could evolve an indigenous technology.