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Mahathir - research

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SHAH ALAM, Aug 9 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the private sector should give greater attention to Research and Development (R&D) activities.

Most R&D activities today were undertaken by the public sector through institutions of higher learning and research institutes like the Rubber Research Institute of Malaysia (RRIM), Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM), Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (MARDI), Palm Oil Research Institute of Malaysia (PORIM) and Standards and Industrial Research Institute of Malaysia (SIRIM), he added.

Of 13,605 people involved in R&D activities in 1989, only 1,835 of them or 11.48 per cent were from the private sector, he said when opening the Matsushita Air-Conditioning Corp Sdn Bhd and Matsushita Compressor and Motor Sdn Bhd plants, here.

He also laid the foundation stone for the Matsushita Air-Conditioning R&D Centre.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the government encouraged the private sector to enhance their R&D activities because it was vital to Malaysia's efforts to become an industrialised nation.

+Though R&D required substantial expenditure, it benefits us in the long term, + he added. -- more

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He, said R&D not only improved the quality of Malaysian goods but also enhance the country's competitive advantage in the international market.

Calling on the private sector to be far-sighted in R&D efforts, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the government would continue to provide basic and suitable infrastructure for its development.

In order to further intensify industrialisation in the country, there was a need for the public and private sectors as well as institutions of higher learning and workers to enhance the role of science and technology in the country's overall socio-economic development, he added.

+The main objective of our science and technology policy is to ensure that continued development in science and technology can serve as the foundation for the creation of a Malaysian society, advanced in terms of technology by the year 2020, + he said.

He said the government's aspiration was to see 37 per cent contribution towards the country's Gross National Product and 81 per cent of total exports by the manufacturing sector by the year 2020. -- more

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The manufacturing sector was also expected to provide employment to some 836,000 Malaysians or 36 per cent of the employment opportunities expected to be created in the next 10 years, he added.

The Prime Minister said Matsushita had contributed greatly towards the country's economic growth and in enhancing Malaysia's name abroad through its products manufactured locally.

Malaysia is now ranked second in the world after Japan as exporter of the window unit airconditioners with exports in 1990 reaching 1.3 million units, he added.

He said he was also told the company surpassed the production figure of five million units early this year.

This was ample proof of the skills and capability of Malaysian workers in the field of manufacturing, he added. -- Rernama

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