

# Law to protect technology and inventions

By LEE KAR YEAN

KUALA LUMPUR: The government is drafting a law to give more protection to the intellectual property of local and foreign investors.

"The Industrial Design Act is being prepared for Parliament," Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

He said the act, together with the Patent Act which was passed in 1986, would pave the way for the orderly transfer of technology to Malaysia.

"Foreign investors can bring in their technology freely with the knowledge that their technology is protected in the country," he said.

The government was also removing restrictions on the employment of foreign R&D personnel and technical experts although it was more profitable to employ Malaysians as they were equally competent and cost less, he said when launching a supplement in a magazine on Malaysia's technical capacity and capability here.

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The supplement, *Malaysia: Technological Competitiveness Towards 2020*, will appear in the worldwide edition of the monthly *Scientific American* in April next year.

The magazine boasts a readership of almost two million in 143 countries, with most of the readers being in the United States and Canada.

The Prime Minister said he supported the initiative to publicise Malaysia's technological capability and capacity which seemed to have been a "well-kept secret."

"At a time when major multinationals are in dire straits in their home countries, their Malaysian operations are prospering.

"I suspect this success has something to do with the overall Malaysian business environment and the high productivity of its labour."

Despite having all the

amenities of a developed country, he said, the cost of living in Malaysia was very much lower than in developed countries.

Dr Mahathir also said Malaysia offered several fiscal incentives to companies to upgrade the technical capability of workers, product development, and more basic-type R&D.

He called on the corporate sector to play an active role in publicising the positive assets and providing testimony to the actual situation in the country.

The world, he said, must be informed of Malaysia's scientific and technological capabilities and other strong points such as skilled and scien-

tifically competent manpower and a workforce with a positive work culture.

Also present at the launching was Science, Technology and Environment Minister Datuk Law Hieng Ding and Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Ahmad Sarji Abdul Hamid.