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LEAD Mahathir-TPM

MAHATHIR CONFIDENT MALAYSIANS CAN MASTER SKILLS

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 28 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is confident that Malaysians can master the skills and the technological edge to catch up with the rest of the industrialised world.

"I believe there is nothing that anyone cannot learn if he really applies himself to it," he said when opening the 280-hectare Technology Park of Malaysia (TPM), near here, which will serve as a nerve centre for research development and innovation in high technology for the country.

The TPM which began in 1988 is only 20 minutes away south of the federal capital in the fast-growing Bukit Jalil area and strategically located within Malaysia's Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC).

The Prime Minister said Malaysia had to leap-frog into the electronics age and this would require people who were more intelligent and better trained than those in the first industrialised age in Europe.

"I'm sure Malaysians can master the skill. It is a matter of applying yourself and if you keep trying and trying, you will, God willing, master the technology and knowledge that is required and that must be acquired by us," he said.

"Try we must and succeed we will," he said.

He said Malaysia was ready to buy technology which it did not have to acquire technology that was needed to make Malaysia an advanced technological state.

Stressing the need for new inventions and a conducive working environment, Dr Mahathir said new factories must be very quiet, habitable with beautiful landscaping in keeping with modern standards.

He was also glad to note that almost all the space in the park had been taken up by industries and there might be a need to expand.

"I think this is a measure of the interest and capacity to take up new industries which require much more knowledge than in the past," he said.

Reminding the audience that Vision 2020 was just 24 years away, Dr Mahathir said he was sure that other Prime Ministers who come after him would achieve the ambitious target of turning Malaysia into a developed country by that year.

He said Malaysia wanted to achieve developed status so that it would not be looked down and trodden upon.

"We want to be able to stand tall and have what they have," he added.

Speaking at a news conference later, Dr Mahathir said there were still people who thought Malaysia was incapable of doing anything and Made-in-Malaysia goods were not bought by them.

"Malaysian-built cars marketed in other countries are introduced as Japanese cars as though we are not involved in any way. The sight of a logo that looks like the crescent is considered a Muslim product, as though we don't have the ability."

On the TPM, he said the centre had achieved much progress and had come up with new products including electronic and multi-media items.

He also announced the Board of Directors of the TPM which was corporatised on Sept 1.

Apart from Tan Sri Dr Omar Abdul Rahman as Chairman, other members of the board are Treasury Secretary (Finance Division) Datuk Dr Hadenan Abdul Jalil, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment Datuk V.Dhanabalan, Vice-Chancellor of Universiti Teknologi Malaysia Datuk Dr Zaharuddin Idrus, Chairman of MRCB Bhd Datuk Khalid

Ahmad, Chairman of Malaysian Sheet Glass Bhd Paul Low and Chief Executive of TPM Dr Mohamad Salleh Ismail.

After the ceremony, the Prime Minister toured the exhibition put up by tenants of the park and also visited the prototype centre there.

The first phase of the park costing RM237 million had been completed and focussed on information technology, software development, microelectronics, telecommunications and aerospace technology.

The RM226-million second phase which is expected to be ready in the year 2000 will promote research and development for biotechnology, medical and environmental technology, agriculture, health, energy and pollution control.

The park is fully equipped with the latest technology such as fibre optics, Internet communications and prototyping facilities for its tenants.

Companies that had set up their operations in the park included Mimos Bhd, Binariang Sdn Bhd and Iris Technologies (M) Sdn Bhd.

Also present at the ceremony were Science, Technology and Environment Minister Datuk Law Hieng Ding and TPM chairman Tan Sri Dr Omar Abdul Rahman, who is also the Science Adviser to the Prime Minister. -- BERNAMA

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