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Mahathir-Technology

REDUCE SOLE RELIANCE ON TECHNOLOGIES OF CERTAIN COUNTRIES, SAYS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 14 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that there is a need for Malaysia to reduce its sole reliance on technologies of certain industrialised countries to achieve full industrialised nation status by the year 2020.

He said Malaysia must have more partners and suppliers of technology and named Russia as one of them.

"Partnership with Russia will certainly assist to extend and enrich our technology as well as create more techno-entrepreneurs.

"Such rare opportunity should not be missed," he said in his speech at the opening of TechXchange '97 at the MINES near here.

His speech was delivered by Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Chong Kah Kiat.

Dr Mahathir said trade between Malaysia and Russia intensified significantly in 1994 with Malaysia's purchase of 19 MiG-29 jets worth some RM1 billion.

"Technology transfer was arranged through the offset programme to enable Malaysian companies, research and development agencies as well as institutes of higher education to receive training in the aircraft, avionics as well as aerospace sector," he added.

In the first seven months of this year, Malaysia's export to Russia amounted to RM110.17 million while its import from Russia totalled RM434.68 million.

In 1996, Malaysia's export to Russia was valued at RM284.6 million while imports from Russia was RM667.88 million.

The major export items to Russia include television receivers, sound recorders, natural rubber, office machines, telecommunications equipment, palm oil and cocoa while imports from Russia include manufactured fertilisers, iron and steel, base metal ores and edible products.

TechXchange '97 is the first high-technology exhibition and conference to highlight the latest sciences and technologies from Russia in the Asia-Pacific region. -- BERNAMA

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