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University of Warwick to transfer oilfield gas flaring expertise to us

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MALAYSIA will send a follow-up team to look into greater detail, the research and development work at the University of Warwick with a view of applying some of their technology, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

The Prime Minister, impressed with the R&D work at the university, wanted to see if Malaysia could benefit from it.

Dr Mahathir spent almost the entire day at the university, about 100km from here, looking at various aspects of research undertaken there.

The university's research, especially those by the Warwick Manufacturing Group, stands out as the most productive.

Under the WMG, the university has a close research tie-up with some of the top names in the manufacturing industry.

The research is jointly undertaken by professional engineers from the companies funding the research, the teaching staff and students.

Malaysia, with 325 students, top the list of foreign countries which enrol students there.

One of the research areas Malaysia is interested in relates to the flaring of gas at petrol fields.

Dr Mahathir was told that the university could make available this technology to Malaysia since Malaysia flares the gas at its oilfields.

"We like to know what we can do for ourselves in this area," he said.

"We would like to follow-up with a research project. We also like to see what productive use we could get from rare earth which are stored in the land.

"Apart from this, we also like to see if we can put to good use some of the other residues from our tin industry."

Malaysia already has the foundation for research collaboration with the university.

Universiti Teknologi Malaysia established the Business and Advanced Technology Centre in Kuala Lumpur in partnership with the WMG.

The BATC's main responsibility is to train and retrain executives, managers and engineers in relevant industries to attain world class performance.

The centre also advises Malaysian industries on, among others, product development and design, infrastructural development, quality management, operations and production management, and human resources development.

Dr Mahathir said there was much that Malaysia could learn from advanced R&D.

"For instance, we need to know everything about designing and then straight on to assembly and production," he said. "Over here, I saw that the research done was very specific, for example, in the field of automotive engineering.

"The research is important in helping to determine every aspect of manufacturing to make it more efficient and eventually profitable. We need to know the latest in technology to maintain and improve upon our competitive edge," the Prime Minister said.

Asked to elaborate on his views concerning the country's balance of payment, Dr Mahathir said the Government had told exporters to trade on CIF basis, meaning that they should export products inclusive of cost, insurance and freight charges.

Asked to elaborate on his earlier comments on his meeting with newly-elected British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Dr Mahathir said apart from

wanting to know Malaysia's views on China, his counterpart also wanted to know the Malaysian experience in turning bills into laws.

In the British experience, Blair told Dr Mahathir that the House of Lords could be a stumbling block in passing bills although they had been passed by the House of Commons.

Dr Mahathir said he gave his views on this drawing from the Malaysian experience although the situation was different in Britain.

"Whether or not Blair intends to use my suggestion is up to him." he said. "I just gave some views on this."

The Prime Minister also visited the office of the Commonwealth Partnership for Technology Management, where he met the CPTM networking members, and its board of directors.

CPTM which had its roots at the 1989 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Kuala Lumpur, brings together governments, companies, and individuals in a smart partnership, and is a new form of Commonwealth co-operation.

Addressing the networking members, Dr Mahathir said confidence building was a part of development, and that some developing countries were not able to progress due to the lack of confidence.

He spoke on the need to monitor the implementation of development projects, and to have a grasp of happenings on the ground.

He drew reference to the Implementation and Co-ordination Unit at the Prime Minister's Department, which enabled the Government to instantly know the progress or delays of development projects.

Dr Mahathir said the ICU started as a war room during the Emergency years and was subsequently used to monitor development.

The Prime Minister also spoke on purchasing power. He brought chuckles from the networking members when he produced from his wallet a 500 billion dinar note from the former Yugoslavia, which at the time of printing was equivalent in value to U\$12 cents, to emphasise the point.

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