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Be innovative and design your own technologies, Dr M tells firms

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KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Malaysian companies must have the ability to design their own technologies to produce goods for the domestic and international markets, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

He said they should, under the present economic situation, devise ways to reduce costs and be self-reliant.

"We must have the ability and capability to design our own technologies so that we can come up with goods for the domestic and international markets," he said when launching MASTERcentre at the Technology Park Malaysia today.

MASTERcentre is an advanced manufacturing automation technology facility providing integrated services from design to the production stage, rental of engineering equipment and customised training to technical consultancy.

To assist them, Dr Mahathir suggested that they make use of the facilities available at the Technology Park Malaysia in order to be less dependent on foreign technology.

The Prime Minister also said TPM, which is under the Industrial Research Priority Area, should spearhead the development of innovative technology to enable the country to become a world producer of manufactured goods and services.

"This achievement is not impossible for the people. Hence, the Government has invested heavily in developing high technology facilities now found at TPM."

Import of technology and goods, though the easy way out, should be minimised.

Dr Mahathir said the Government would always give attention to efforts in producing local goods, adding that consumers should also support this by buying Malaysian products.

"We must have total faith in our ability to design and produce 'world standard' goods that can compete with foreign-manufactured ones.

Efforts by TPM to assist the local industries are timely and co-operation between the two will enable them to benefit greatly and make Malaysia a smart production centre where special infrastructure facilities, skilled workers and high technologies are available.

"We will then be able to reduce imports through 'upstream' production processes like the production of 'mould and dies' components and 'precision parts' used in the making of components."

He said Malaysia was now the 16th largest exporter in the world, exporting US\$78.2 billion (RM297.16 billion) worth of goods.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysian companies should also master foreign technologies quickly.

"They should not only assemble goods using imported components," he said, but to produce their own components.

The making of these components must be in large quantities to enable them to be exported as well.

Malaysia can also use its position to offer consultancy services to developing countries.

"Taking the opportunity brought about by the lower value of the ringgit, Malaysia can provide 'services' in the field of information technology at a competitive rate."

He said the high government investment in the development of robotic facilities and skilled workers at MASTERcentre was to assist the country

in deriving benefits from its application.

"I appeal to all quarters to make full use of the robotic facilities provided in training, manufacturing of components and goods.

"We must have the confidence to invent new products and not to be too obsessed with products invented by others," Dr Mahathir said.

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