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Mahathir-technology

M'SIA NEEDS TO UPGRADE TECHNOLOGY, SAYS MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 24 (Bernama) -- Malaysia needs to possess the capability to innovate home-grown technology in order to manufacture products for local and foreign consumption, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said in light of the current economic setbacks local companies would have to be smart to be self-reliant while at the same time cutting overhead costs.

"Importing technologies and materials for our needs, although that may be the easy way out, should be minimised," he said when opening MASTERCentre which promotes greater automation in industries through use of robotics.

The establishment, located in the Technology Park Malaysia in Bukit Jalil, was formerly known as the Centre for Robotics and Flexible Manufacturing Systems.

The prime minister said Malaysians should be bold in inventing products and methods which others have not yet attempted to do.

"Let's us not be too constrained by existing products invented by others. Have confidence in ourselves," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the government would always accord due attention to ventures geared towards self-production of goods.

"In his respect consumers should give their support and buy Malaysian-made products," he said.

The prime minister said Malaysians should have full confidence in their nation's ability to invent and produce goods of world standard matching foreign-made ones.

Dr Mahathir urged all parties to make the most of the robotics facilities available at the Technology Park Malaysia for purposes of training in components manufacturing and product research development with the view to enhancing quality and output.

Dr Mahathir said local companies should act fast in mastering foreign technology and start producing own components rather than merely assembling those which are mostly imported.

Components manufacturing would require maintaining sizeable volume and international quality standards and should not be limited to catering for local factories only but also for export.

The prime minister said manufacturing in volume would help attain economies of scale leading to lesser costs.

He said as for providing services, Malaysia could also capitalise on its position to offer consultancy services to developing countries.

"In making the most of the lower value of our currency now, Malaysia, for instance, can provide services in information technology at competitive terms," he said.

Malaysia currently ranked 16th among the world's manufacturing countries with export turn-over amounting to US\$78.2 billion, the prime minister said.

However the country needed to better this position by way of the local industries intensifying output, he said.

This could be achieved by creating the infrastructure as well as providing skilled and knowledge workers, he said.

Malaysia was now developing the education sector so that students could pursue tertiary education in local universities, he said.

Dr Mahathir described the move by the Technology Park Malaysia to assist local industries as appropriate and urged the industry, in turn, to collaborate with the park in exploiting mutual benefits out of their respective strong points.

Firstly, their collaboration could turn Malaysia into a smart manufacturing centre with the availability of special infrastructure, skilled workforce and the emphasis on high technology.

Consequently, Malaysia could lessen import burdens through upstream manufacturing of "mould and dies components" and "precision child parts" used in components manufacturing, he added. -- BERNAMA

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