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Mahathir-technology

PUT RESEARCH TO GOOD USE, MAHATHIR TELLS PRIVATE SECTOR

BANGI, Jan 13 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today launched a technological park of the Malaysian Institute for Nuclear Technology Research (MINT Tech-Park) and called on companies to put findings by local research institutions to good use.

Closer rapport and cooperation between them was crucial as the institutions have the technology and expertise to enhance industries' competitive edge, he said.

"Perhaps there'll come a time when Malaysian companies can substitute foreign technology with local knowhow," Dr Mahathir said when officiating at the launching here.

Dr Mahathir said acquiring technology and the capacity to create new ones was vital to Malaysia's march towards attaining a developed nation status by 2020.

"This is because Malaysia's ability to compete in the world market hinges on her technological capabilities," he said.

The prime minister said the government had set aside substantial allocations for research and development (R&D) programmes especially in the public sector while providing various incentives to promote greater private sector R&D activities.

"Although R&D requires huge financial input, we have to look at it as a long-term investment crucial for increasing competitiveness of the country's products," he said.

When approached by reporters later, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia has a dismal experience in encouraging the local private sector to capitalise on discoveries made by domestic research institutions.

"So much of research discoveries by government agencies are left abandoned as they (private companies) were too preoccupied with chasing after quick profits by putting up housing estates and buildings which doesn't require much skill," he said.

The prime minister said Malaysian companies should emulate their Japanese counterparts which looked upon research discoveries as vehicles for eminence and wealth if made the most of.

"Companies in Malaysia not only don't conduct research but don't apply research discoveries. The easiest way is to build and sell houses, it doesn't require any brilliant mind," Dr Mahathir said when asked about the private sector's response to applying findings by local research institutions.

On local companies' involvement in R&D activities, he said they should not overly depend on government's incentives to initiate such activities.

The most valueable incentive for doing R&D would be the profits companies could reap by making the most of their research discoveries, he said.

"This (R&D) is for their own good. You don't ask whether the government will give incentive or not every time you want something.

"They will make a profit if they use the technology available. Even if government agencies can gain by selling their research findings, I think the private sector will gain even more," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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