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Allocation for R&D may be increased, says Dr M

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - The Government will consider increasing the allocation for research and development under the Eighth Malaysia Plan given the encouraging response, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

In a speech read by Science, Technology and Environment Minister Datuk Law Hieng Ding, Dr Mahathir said the Government devoted substantial resources to the development of science under the Seventh Malaysia Plan.

And this was crucial as research findings could best contribute towards wealth creation through generation of new or improved products, processes or services, he said.

He was speaking at the opening of the Invention, Innovation, Industrial Design and Technology exhibition at the Mines International Exhibition Centre.

Themed "A Decade of Innovation", Itex '99 will end on Sunday. It is organised by Sirim Bhd and the Malaysian Invention and Design Society.

Dr Mahathir said the Government hoped that more research findings and inventions would make it to the market.

"A high degree of perseverance is critical for any researcher since most worthwhile achievements require persistence and courage in the face of numerous obstacles," he said.

He added that in enhancing the industry's capacity to innovate, the needs of the small and medium industries could not be sidelined. "In most developed countries, the small firms are the dynamos of the new economy."

Occupying 1,800 sq metres of space, the exhibition showcases some 100 innovations from local inventors ranging from second-hand smoke filter to an intelligent community vehicle designed to be used in Putrajaya.

The highlight of the show is the Prime Minister's Pavillion which showcases 20 inventions that came from ideas mooted by Dr Mahathir.

Among the 20 inventions are the zirconia cutter made of ceramics, computer aided batik machine and the inclinor produced by Sirim, the flight simulator by Mindez and the crude palm oil car by Porim.

More than 60 local inventions today also entered the Invention and Design competition in which the winners of 20 categories will be announced tomorrow.

Minds president Tan Sri Augustine Ong said the number of inventions by local inventors had been very encouraging and he hoped that the number would continue to increase.

"Over the past decade more than 700 Malaysian inventions have been showcased and many outstanding inventors have been discovered," he said.

"We hope to achieve a target membership of one million soon."

Itex '99 senior project manager Melissa Wu said the show received good response on its first day.

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