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Mahathir-8MP (Human Resource)

8MP TO PRIORITISE SUPPLY OF MANPOWER FOR KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY

KUALA LUMPUR, April 23 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the Eighth Malaysia Plan (8MP) will give priority in producing adequate manpower to support the development of a knowledge-based economy.

He said the move was appropriate to ensure that the nation was able to face the challenges of globalisation and sustain economic growth.

Tabling the 8MP at the Dewan Rakyat, here, Dr Mahathir said efforts to increase productivity would depend on increasing the knowledge content of all economic activities and the availability of an adequate supply of highly skilled and knowledge manpower.

Towards this end, efforts would be further intensified to expand the supply of highly skilled and knowledge manpower through the expansion of the education and training capacity with greater emphasis towards increasing the supply of science and technology (S&T) manpower.

In this aspect, he said, the capacity of the S&T related educational and training programmes at the tertiary level would be further expanded to expedite the achievement of the 60:40 ratio of science to arts students.

To meet this objective, the education and training system would be reoriented to ensure that the output from these institutions could match the requirements of new technology and knowledge needed to spur economic growth and enhance competitiveness, he said.

Dr Mahathir said the education and training system would also emphasise nurturing creativity and cognitive skills and give priority to producing multi-skilled and knowledge manpower that is versatile, willing to learn continuously and technopreneurial.

He also said that the government would launch the Education Saving Scheme to encourage parents to save for their children's education.

To induce more firms, especially the small- and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs), to move into higher capital-intensity production processes and optimise the utilisation of local labour, the government would implement several initiatives, he said.

Dr Mahathir said the prime target was to encourage more women, especially those with tertiary education, to join the labour force.

This would be achieved through further amendments to the Employment Act 1995 to include new modes of working such as teleworking, part-time work and job sharing.

He said the amendment of the Act would also facilitate the setting-up of community nurseries and kindergartens within residential areas and ensure better access to training opportunities.

Pensioners with the appropriate qualifications and experience would continue to be considered for re-employment, on a case-by-case basis, he added.

-- BERNAMA

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