

More focus on STEM and TVET, says Dr M

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KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia is emulating Japan, Germany and the United States in focusing on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects and technical and vocational education and training (TVET), said Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said the move to make STEM and TVET the main education agenda was to produce more skilled technical professionals.

Developed countries, he said, had emphasised the human capital development in technical fields.

"These workers, equipped with the latest knowledge and armed with a competitive streak, are the key to a country's success," he

said at the launch of the National Technical Profession Day celebration here yesterday.

Malaysia, he said, was catching up in terms of STEM and TVET education.

"Latest statistics showed that 44 per cent of Malaysians have chosen STEM as their preferred field. The government aims to increase the percentage to 60 per cent."

Dr Mahathir said history showed that Malaysia had shifted from an agriculture-based nation to an industry-driven nation.

"The main players of this success were technical professionals."

He said in Germany, seven out of its 10 biggest companies were involved in technical fields.

"Innovation is prioritised there, paving the way for more technology inventions. This has resulted in the country having the most international registered patents."

He said Malaysian expertise was recognised abroad as many Malaysians possessed high knowledge in technical professions.

He said Petroliaam Nasional Bhd (Petronas), for example, operated worldwide as it had skilled workers in the oil and gas industry.

He encouraged technical workers to equip themselves with the latest skills via upgrading and up-scaling to reduce dependency on foreign labour.

He said the National Technical Profession Day was a starting



Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad says Malaysia is now an industry-driven nation. PIC BY SAIRIEN NAFIS

point for the government's efforts to further develop the field.

"I hope that through this platform, the public will be exposed to areas with huge potential to be explored, especially in the technical and technology fields."

The event was organised by a

committee comprising the Works Ministry, Public Works Department, TM ONE, Malaysian Highway Authority and Pertubuhan Professional JKR Malaysia.

Among the platinum exhibitors were CIDB Malaysia, Maxis, Acson, Petronas and MMC-Gamuda.