

# IBS TECH TO DRIVE AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Digital boost will help govt meet target of building 1 million homes in 10 years, says Dr M**

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**D**igital technology used in the Industrialised Building System (IBS) method of construction will help in the government's push to build more affordable housing.

Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said digital IBS, which involved the use of robotics, would not only benefit the housing sector, but also upskill the workforce.

He said the technology had the potential to reduce the country's dependency on foreign workers, thus preventing yearly outflow of capital.

"Innovation and digital technology will be the way forward to tackle the demand for affordable homes. The use of digital IBS, which comprises Building Information Modelling (BIM), an on-line design tool coupled with IBS in public housing projects, will help the government meet its target of one million affordable homes over a period of 10 years," he said at the opening of the Gamuda IBS factory in the Mahkota Industrial Area yesterday.

The IBS factory is the second to be built by Gamuda Bhd since



Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad signing a plaque at the opening of the Gamuda IBS factory in Banting yesterday. With him are (from left) Gamuda board member Raja Datuk Seri Eleena Sultan Azlan Shah, Deputy Works Minister Mohd Anuar Mohd Tahir and Water, Land and Natural Resources Minister Dr Xavier Jayakumar. pic by saddam yusoff

2016. Both factories were developed at costs totalling RM500 million.

The Gamuda IBS factory here is able to build 10,000 homes and 16,000 bathroom pods a year.

While commending Gamuda for its investment in IBS, Dr Mahathir said the digital shift in the construction sector was a disruptive technology of which the country needed more.

"Their (Gamuda) move can set the trend in elevating and shifting construction. The digital manufacturing for construction will not only help the government build the affordable homes of the future, but will also result

in faster construction; a substantial reduction in dependency on foreign workers in the construction sector; substantial upskilling and localisation of the Malaysian construction workforce; and superior quality," he said.

He commended Gamuda IBS for building affordable homes at comparable standards with high-end luxury homes.

Dr Mahathir said embracing digital IBS technology was timely as it was evolving with the Fourth Industrial Revolution, as well as the current trend of automation and manufacturing technologies that include cloud computing and BIM.

He said as Malaysia was a developing country, providing an efficient supply of affordable homes was one of the government's top priorities, with a special focus on the bottom 40 per cent income group (B40).

He said this was part of an effort to ensure the wellbeing and upward mobility of Malaysians, since having a comfortable living space at the right location would help people pursue employment or other economic opportunities.

Dr Mahathir said the National Housing Policy (2018-2025) contained specifications for housing for the B40, including build-ups of not less than 900 sq ft along

with amenities, facilities and access to public transport infrastructure, including railway systems to improve connectivity and spur business activities.

"Affordable housing development projects should be well planned with quality recreational facilities like a park, sports area and a community club.

"A quality home is essentially a place where not only the living space is comfortable but it comes together in a conducive surrounding."

Dr Mahathir said among the short-term goals of the National Housing Policy was to build up to 100,000 affordable homes capped at RM300,000 by the end of the year.

The policy has also produced the National Affordable Housing Council, National Home Ownership Campaign and National Community Policy.

Addressing concerns of oversupply, Dr Mahathir said one of the ways to mitigate such a phenomenon was the Rent-to-Own scheme, which offers buyers the option to rent their homes for five years and apply for end-financing to purchase the property in the sixth year.

"The (Housing and Local Government) Ministry has also been tasked with reviewing the Build-Then-Sell policy this year, which could reduce the risk to property buyers."

He urged federal and state governments to address affordable housing issues.

He said this was needed to resolve issues like supply and demand mismatch due to poor location, affordability levels and the need to manage profit while meeting the needs of the rakyat.