

## KERATAN AKHBAR

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### **Mustapa: Produce more local STEM talent to strengthen manufacturing sector**



KUALA LUMPUR (May 19): The government is focusing on producing more local talents in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) in addressing the challenges in Malaysia's manufacturing sector.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Economy) Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed said that manufacturing is among the critical industries with potential integration into the global value chain, but the sector is still short of skilled talents, particularly scientists, technologists, and engineers.

"The Twelfth Malaysia Plan (12MP) aims to lay the foundation to position Malaysia as a high-income nation status by 2025. It is imperative that our nation is equipped with a highly skilled workforce that can meet the industry's demand. As such, STEM enrolment remains the focus in Malaysia's journey to become a developed nation," he said in a statement.

Mustapa said this in his speech when officiating the Special Taskforce to Facilitate Business (PEMUDAH) National Forum on STEM, themed "STEM Education: Key to Manufacturing Innovation" on Thursday (May 19), co-organised by PEMUDAH, the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers, and Malaysia Productivity Corporation (MPC).

The minister said the strength of Malaysia's manufacturing industry is closely tied to the country's ability to churn out the top local talent in STEM related fields, wherein the sector can potentially integrate it into the global value chain more significantly.

"This can be done by placing a stronger focus on design and development in manufacturing activities. New technical solutions are needed to promote advancement in the industry. These innovations in technology, supply chain, and management will improve the productivity and quality of manufacturing processes, hence industry players must be proactive in utilising new technologies."

Mustapa reiterated the importance of developing a workforce equipped with skills and knowledge in STEM related fields, as such local talent is much needed to elevate the manufacturing sector and Malaysia's economy as a whole.

Meanwhile, MPC director-general Datuk Abdul Latif Abu Seman said the corporation is committed to facilitating the government's agenda in building a robust STEM workforce.

"Talent is one of the vital productivity drivers. Strengthening the local talent means uplifting productivity growth. MPC will work with PEMUDAH in this area. Through the Productivity Nexus initiatives, MPC will form innovative collaborations with the industry players within the manufacturing sector to produce more STEM talents," he said.

The manufacturing industry remains Malaysia's crucial economic sector, contributing the second highest to the country's Gross Domestic Product. Under the 12MP, the manufacturing sector is positioned to expand at 5.7% annually.