

Wish list for construction sector

WORKS MINISTRY: Perks for heavy machinery and automation will reduce dependency on foreign labour

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THE Works Ministry hopes the 2013 Budget will introduce tax incentives for heavy machinery and automation in the construction industry.

"This will help the construction industry move towards greater mechanisation and automation, and reduce foreign labour dependency," Works Minister Datuk Seri Shaziman Abu Mansor said at the launch of the Akademi Binaan Malaysia (ABM) alumni here yesterday.

Industry players have lamented

that taxes on construction machinery in Malaysia were the highest in Southeast Asia and were a major deterrent towards greater mechanisation by contractors.

Shaziman said if these taxes were lowered, it could trigger a chain effect among contractors as greater investment in mechanisation and local skilled workers would pave the way towards achieving a high-income economy.

The 2010/2011 Economic Report

states that out of the 1.8 million registered migrant workers in Malaysia, some 16 per cent are employed in the construction sector.

The Performance Management and Delivery Unit (Pemandu) anticipated about 60 per cent of the workforce needed in the country to come from the technical and vocational field in eight years.

He urged youths in the country to venture into technical and vocational fields where there are

plenty of opportunities driven by the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP).

"For example, there is the MRT projects worth RM36.6 billion, and the refinery and petrochemical integrated development (Rapid) project in Pengerang, Johor, that is worth RM62 billion.

"For the Rapid project alone, 40,000 skilled workers are needed in the oil and gas industry to ensure this project is completed by 2016," he said.

He also urged the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) to continue to increase cooperation with key players in the construction

industry to identify technical expertise needed particularly in the field of rail infrastructure as well as oil and gas industry.

Currently, CIDB is working with local and international oil and gas movers such as Malaysia Petroleum Resources Corp (MPRC), Malaysia Offshore Contractors' Association (MOCA) and Petronas to ensure skilled workforce are trained according to the specification needed by the particular industry.

Shaziman's 2013 Budget wish list also included more funds for the ministry to maintain roads as well as replace some 40 old bridges in the Federal Territory.

