

From the Newspaper

'Tools of the trade'

APROPOS the news item 'Tools of the trade' (Oct 21). Fewer than five per cent of young Americans train as apprentices. In Germany, around 60pc of young people participate in 'apprenticeship programs'. No wonder Germany's economy is still strong and steady, relentlessly powered by a productive, industrial base and well-fed by competent, trained, industrial manpower; whereas in the United States, actual de-industrialisation has taken place in and around the key industrial states of Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, and Pennsylvania. That is not all, industrial units and manufacturing jobs have either been lost or exported to China mostly or other Asian powerhouses.

Pakistan, is yet to usher in full-scale industrialisation whereas we also possess a ballooning, talented young population.

It is time that we imitate the German model, and develop public-private apprenticeship programmes across all industrial and technological sectors strictly on open merit, so that we can develop our industrial base as well as provide career opportunities to our youth.

These programmes should partly be funded by the government, part by the entrepreneurs, and part by the apprentices themselves so that there is a feeling of 'ownership' for this project. Further, the brightest apprentices could be sent abroad for industrial training and skills upgradation.

This is the best path to Pakistan's progress and prosperity.

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