

SEEK NEW TECHNIQUES ON YOUR OWN, PM TELLS LOCAL BUILDERS

'Technology transfer won't fall on your lap'

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KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. — Builders should prepare and look for new techniques rather than simply wait for technology transfer to "fall on their laps," Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister, referring to contractors' complaints about the inroads made by foreign competitors in this country, said the cost and time advantages of the latest construction techniques could benefit local builders in the long run.

"There is no need to talk too much about technology transfer... it will not happen if we are not prepared to receive it," he said at the "topping off" ceremony of the Pan-

Pacific Hotel, which is due for completion late this year.

He said despite the apparent exclusion of local construction companies, property developers and Government tenderers preferred the fixed schedules and cost guarantees offered by the foreign firms.

Dr Mahathir chided the dissatisfied builders who used "time consuming methods" and only "see their ability to complete the projects" but appear to disregard the cost overruns and postponements that had plagued the industry in the past.

He also said top-flight hotels which made lavish earnings while the industry was short of rooms now deserved their cost problems as

profits shrank with the looming glut.

"It serves them right. We told them not to raise charges when there was a shortage of rooms."

He criticised hoteliers who ignored Government appeals to bring prices down when demand far exceeded supply in the late seventies and early eighties.

As labour costs rose with rising profits, the hotels found they could not cut these costs as prices were forced down by the flood of new rooms.

He advised the upcoming Pan-Pacific Hotel to keep its prices moderate.

The hotel, part of the Putra World Trade complex and a branch of the international Tokyu Hotels group of Japan, boasts of a "five-star deluxe" status for its 556 rooms and leisure amenities.