

MAHATHIR RAPS LOCAL CONTRACTORS

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues.

— Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad today took local contractors and workers to task for not keeping up with the latest technology in construction.

The Prime Minister said the local contractors instead criticised moves to award large projects to foreign contractors.

He said that local contractors used outdated methods so much so that most buildings were not completed on schedule.

"Some projects take twice the scheduled period to complete resulting in increased costs.

"But if foreigners are asked to do the job, projects are completed on time and there is no cost increase," he said.

Dr Mahathir was speaking at the topping-off ceremony of the Pan-Pacific Hotel here this morning.

He said local contractors did not take into account matters such as cost increase and delays in completion.

"They only question why foreigners are asked to undertake large projects when locals can do it as well," he said.

"However, I am glad that some contractors have learnt their lessons and can complete their projects on time.

"But they still have a long way to go and a lot to learn. There is no point in waiting for the latest technology to drop into their laps.

"Local workers and contractors should instead make efforts to acquire this technology," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the Pan Pacific Hotel was a good example of foreign expertise at its best.

"Although initially the project was behind schedule, the contractors have cut costs and time and I am happy that the building will now be completed as scheduled.

"Many new ideas and methods were used to achieve this. The local contractors can learn much from this building," he said.

The five-star hotel, housed within the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC), is scheduled to open in October.

Seri Pacific Corporation chairman Datuk Rahim Abdul Rahman said the construction of the hotel was a technical milestone in the country's construction industry.

The project was started 20 months ago and was undertaken by foreign contractors and consultants.

Dr Mahathir later viewed a mock-up model of the hotel.