

# Go after technology, Dr M tells engineers

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BANGI, Sat. — Malaysians should actively pursue new technology instead of waiting for it to be transferred wholesale from foreigners, Prime Minister ~~Datuk~~ Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"We often hear talk of the foreigners' reluctance to transfer technology to us. But we know that many developing countries, which have achieved the status of newly industrialising country, have mastered new technology.

"Why can these countries do it and we can't while the source of technology is the same?" Dr Mahathir asked at the opening of a palm diesel pilot plant and the launching of the Elko Engine project here.

The answer, he said, was because Malaysians were waiting for foreign technology to be transferred to them wholesale.

"Our people don't pursue technology. They regard technology-transfer as the responsibility of the foreigners," he added.

That is why, he said, Malaysians knew only how to assemble the radios and calculators they produced and sold to the world.

"Some of our engineers don't even know how to examine and study the circuit board of the radios and calculators so that these equipment can be manufactured locally," he said.

But Japanese, Korean and Taiwanese engineers do examine and study to understand the technology of foreign products, he said.

Through the process of "reverse engineering," they are able to manufacture these items on their own.

"Many of our engineers

prefer to become administrators rather than invent for the benefit of the people," he said.

The Prime Minister also called upon research and development organisations in the public sector as well as private sector to make greater effort to develop new technology so that greater use can be made of raw materials produced locally.

He said that research and development was an important process to fully exploit the local raw materials.

The 0.6 per cent allocation from the GNP for research and development purposes, he said, was far too low when compared to the amount spent by advanced countries for the same purpose.

The \$2.9 million palm diesel pilot plant, established by Palm Oil Research Institute Malaysia (Porim) has a yearly production capacity of 3,000 tons of methyl ester. The entire development of the project is expected to cost \$11.7 million in the next two years.

Initial tests carried out on several taxis and vehicles owned by Porim proved that palm diesel can be used as a substitute fuel.

In connection with the palm diesel pilot plant, another project was undertaken by Porim to jointly develop the Elko engine with Lizenza of West Germany and Mitusi of Japan to run on raw palm oil as well as palm diesel.

The Prime Minister was later taken on a tour of the plant. Dr Mahathir also inspected a palm diesel fuelled taxi and two Volkswagens fitted with Elko engines.