

Dr M: Skills alone won't be enough

By Azmi M. Anshar

SHAH ALAM, Tues. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said trained and skilled manpower alone would not help make Malaysia a developed country by the year 2020.

The Prime Minister said to achieve the objective, Malaysian workers should cultivate excellent work ethics, discipline and efficiency in their work and make quality their priority.

Speaking at the opening of the Saga Academy, a \$5-million technical training school set up by Edaran Otomobil Nasional Bhd (EON) here today, Dr Mahathir said the private sector must intensify its efforts to train workers.

This will be in line with Government efforts to encourage more private sector participation in the overall

development of the country, he said.

He added that with the right approach in training and skills development, efforts to turn the country into a developed nation by 2020 would be achieved.

The academy is a joint effort between EON and Petronas to train and upgrade the skills of local mechanics, and supplement EON's requirement for trained mechanics.

Dr Mahathir said the need for such workers would increase when local industries upgraded their technology and opted for modernisation to maintain and improve their competitive edge.

Malaysian workers must be prepared to equip themselves with all sorts of skills and *knowledge on* modern technology to fulfill increased demands besides improving their capability

and productivity.

On the academy, Dr Mahathir said budding mechanics would be given proper training to ensure better after-sales service.

He said recent information showed that 90 per cent of students opted for academic studies while the rest entered vocational institutions.

He added that those who were trained in the technical field would be in a more advantageous position than others.

Dr Mahathir advised mechanics who graduate from the academy and who want to enter into their own vehicle repair business to first learn management skills.

After opening the academy, Dr Mahathir accepted cheques for sums totalling \$1.015 million from six companies sponsoring the academy, including \$850,000 from Proton.