

Japanese serious about imparting know-how says PM

By Edward Cheah

SHAH ALAM, Fri. — The Japanese are serious in efforts to transfer technology to Malaysia, the Prime Minister said today.

He said the joint-venture with Mitsubishi Motor Corporation to produce the national car was one good example.

"Perhaps it would not have been possible for us to build the Proton Saga without Japanese technology because in the field of car building, there is no one else who is willing or capable of transferring this technology to us," Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

Speaking to reporters after laying the foundation stone for the \$90 million Matsushita Air-Conditioning Research and Development Centre (Macrad), Dr Mahathir said the investment was additional proof of the earnestness of the Japanese in this regard.

"In fact, it is the intention of the company to one day have this R&D centre develop and design room air-conditioners and components which would enable associated companies in Japan to build them by paying a royalty.

"By 1997 or the year 2000, we will be able to sell technology to Japan. The Matsushita R&D centre here will also comprise mainly Malaysian engineers," he said.

Dr Mahathir hoped that other Japanese and multinational companies would set up R&D centres in Malaysia.

Asked whether he was satisfied with the level of technology transfer by non-Japanese companies,

the Prime Minister said he wanted to see the country's capability improve always.

He pointed out that American electronic companies like Intel and Motorola had undertaken R&D efforts and trained Malaysians.

In his speech, Dr Mahathir told local companies to take a long-term view of R&D although it involved huge investments because the efforts would improve the quality of Malaysian goods and boost the country's competitive edge.

The Government, he said, would continue to provide the basic infrastructure and the environment necessary for R&D efforts.

"Research calls for a special attitude on the

part of those involved in it. One cannot be a researcher if he is not willing to question whatever he knows or has learnt.

"New approaches and creations cannot come about if a researcher believes that the present approach and methods are the only ones which can be used," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the success or failure of a research programme depended on the perseverance of the researcher who must be willing to press on even though he might be faced with numerous failures.

He said R&D efforts ought to be an important and permanent feature in any industry.

Earlier Dr Mahathir said his meeting today with Kelantan Menteri Be-

sar Haji Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat touched on the possibility of co-operation between the state and Federal Governments in developing Kelantan.

"I stressed to him that the Federal Government does not intend to obstruct the development of Kelantan or block the spending already allocated," he said, adding that the form of co-operation had not been determined (See Page 2).

To a question, Dr Mahathir reiterated that any Federal Government assistance should not be politicised.

"If they should claim that even without supporting the Government, they still obtain help, then this would create uneasiness on the part of the Federal Government," he said.