

Matsushita move good example: PM

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By AZAM ANIS

MATSUSHITA'S move to set-up its air-conditioning research and development centre (Macrad) in Malaysia is a strong indication of Japan's willingness to transfer its technology here.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad told reporters in Shah Alam yesterday that Japanese companies have been singled out in the past of being slow in transferring

technology to Malaysia but they have now successfully transferred a lot.

"For example, we may not be able to produce the national car without Japanese technology. In car manufacturing, there are no other people (other than the Japanese) who are willing transfer their technology to us.

"Macrad is another proof of Japan's seriousness in providing Malaysia with the latest technology. One day Macrad will be developing a new range of air conditioning units which will also be commercially manufactured by Matsushita companies in Japan.

"In this case, Matsushita companies in Japan will be paying royalty to the Malaysian based R and D centre. Today, Matsushita Malaysia is paying royalty to Matsushita Research in Japan as we are

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad described his latest meeting with Kelantan Menteri Besar Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat yesterday in Kuala Lumpur as cordial and both leaders exchanged ideas on possible ways that the Federal and State governments can cooperate.

He said the Federal Government has no intention of preventing federal aid from reaching Kelantan or stopping development progress in the state. He added that he believes good relations between the Federal and State governments is possible.

"I hope matters such as Federal Government aid should not be politicised in Kelantan. I also feel that religion should also not be politicised."

using its technology. I hope by 1997 or 2000 we can sell the technology to Japan," Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said.

Earlier, the Prime Minister opened the Matsushita Air Conditioning Corp and Matsushita Compressor and Motor plants. He also laid the foundation stone for Macrad.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said Matsushita's move should be a good example for other Japanese and foreign companies to set up R and D centres in the country.

He wants more foreign companies to intensify their R and D work and transfer technology to locals as this will help to increase the country's capabilities in the long run.

A few electronic based American com-

Cont'd Back Page, Col. 1

PM: Move

good example

■ FROM PAGE ONE

panies like Motorola and Intel, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said, have done R and D and designing here and such moves have benefitted the local workforce.

In his speech, the Prime Minister said the wider application of science and technology is necessary to create a solid and competitive economy and if Malaysia is to achieve developed nation status by 2020.

In this respect, the Government will continue to improve and intensify its R and D through various institutes like commodities based research institutes and the Standards and Industrial Research Institute of Malaysia.

However, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir would like to see increased participation in R and D from the private sector. In 1989, for example, the country's R and D sector employed 13,605 people, but only 1,835 or 13.48 per cent were employed by the private sector.

"R and D will not only help to improve product quality but also enhance the country's competitive advantage in the international market. Due to this we should be forward looking when it comes to R and D," he added.

At present, the Matsushita Group of companies in Malaysia consists of 13 manufacturing companies, one sales and service company and one R and D company.

Of the 13 manufacturing companies two are currently under construction. Based on its 1991 business plan, consolidated sales of the group will amount to \$3.6 billion or 3 per cent of Malaysia's gross domestic product.