

PM: Slow technology transfer due to lack of interest and determination

# Malaysians are to blame

From  
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PARIS, Sun. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad blamed the disinterestedness of Malaysians for the slow transfer of high technology and sophisticated know-how to Malaysia.

The Prime Minister said it was now possible to have knowledge and technology in any field, including the know-how on building sophisticated ships and space-craft, if Malaysians really wanted them.

"Everyone — Government officials, businessmen, entrepreneurs and workers — must be interested, otherwise forget about technology transfer," he said to Malaysian pressmen yesterday at the end of his four-day official visit to France.

Dr Mahathir said that while it used to be fashionable to blame foreign companies and sources for their reluctance to transfer their skills, the truth now is that Malaysians lacked the will and determination to acquire them.

More foreign companies were ever ready to pass on their knowledge and skills now than there were interested Malaysians willing to accept them, he said.

and construction.

Dr Mahathir visited Aerospatiale's composite manufacturing facility in Nantes last Friday and was shown how some aircraft components were made for Airbus Industrie using the material.

He said since it had become known that Malaysia was planning to set up composite producing facilities, a number of proposals have been made by companies in Britain and France to produce components for them.

To a question on visa, the Prime Minister said the French Government had agreed to waive the requirement for Malaysians but he warned that the privilege must not be abused as many had done in the past and were still doing in other countries.

He said because a few choose to overstay and work without permits, like in Japan for instance, the bona fide visitors had to suffer the close examination of immigration authorities.

The agreement on the abolition of visas signed between the two countries in 1961 was revoked by France in 1986 on "security grounds" but French nationals visiting Malaysia for less than a month are

Dr Mahathir said: "For technology transfer to take place, there must be the giver and the receiver. But if the receiver is not interested, technology transfer cannot take place."

To a question that not all Malaysian companies could afford the foreign technology, he said: "This is often more the excuse than the real reason behind their lack of new technology."

He said it was a question of resourcefulness and willingness and a small entrepreneur should try to adjust his requirements to the funding available to him.

The Prime Minister deplored the attitude of those entrepreneurs who wanted to embark only on easy projects and were interested only in quick profits and cared little for new technology.

"These are the people who do not help us to progress," he said.

On composites, he said the material had tremendous potential in such industries as aircraft, boats

not required to have a visa.

Dr Mahathir described his visit as "generally successful" and said he had fruitful discussions with President Francois Mitterrand and Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, other ministers and French businessmen and entrepreneurs.

The exchange of views and the agreements the Malaysians signed with the French during the visit would help bring closer the on-going cooperation and good relations and upgrade trade between the two countries.

Asked for his reaction to the death of North Korean leader Kim Il-Sung, he said he did not foresee much early changes, adding that some turmoil was bound to take place.

He hoped that whoever took over as leader would allow North Korea to be more open, as had taken place in China and Vietnam. Pyongyang should become a responsible member of the international community.