

Dr M: Japan will always be ahead

JITRA, Sat. — Japanese companies should not have any fears of transferring their technology to Malaysia since Japan is well ahead of our country in terms of technological development, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said Japan need not worry about losing their technology to Malaysia as what was termed as good or advanced technology today would be considered obsolete in the near future.

"Present technology is not the ultimate. So, even if we were to get Japanese technology today it will be old soon.

"Japan is progressing by coming up with new technology all the time. So, it should not worry about Malaysia acquiring its technology. Japan will always be ahead of us," Dr Mahathir said in response to questions from members of the Japan News Network, a Japanese

broadcasting station, on whether Malaysia expected more Japanese companies to transfer technology here.

The Japanese reporters were covering the Prime Minister's visit to the one-village-one-product project workshop conducted by Pembinaan Jayabumi Sdn Bhd at Kampung Naga here.

Accompanying him were his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, Menteri Besar Tan Sri Osman Aroff, Deputy Rural Development Minister Yassin Kamari and Deputy International Trade and Industry Minister Chua Jui Meng.

Asked what other expectations the country has placed on Japan, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was always willing to learn from the country.

"We have always been learning from Japan ... that is why we have the 'Look East' policy.

"We want to learn more about technology, management style, work ethics and ideas like the one-village-one-product concept as well as resort development."

Dr Mahathir said the two countries needed to work together for the good of East Asia in particular, and for developing countries in general.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir received two contracts on behalf of Jayabumi Sdn Bhd for the purchase of 5,000 units of fibreglass waste water treatment tanks from the Rural Development Ministry and US\$1.5 million (RM3.83 million) worth of the tanks from Japan-based Hiroko Company Ltd.

The Japanese company was represented by its president, Masayaki Nakaya, while Yassin represented the Ministry.

The fibreglass tanks were produced by villagers under the one-village-one-product pro-

gramme introduced by the Prime Minister. The project is aimed at increasing the income level of the rural population and providing them with skills.

Under the scheme, each village in the State will develop certain economic activities. The final products of the villagers are bought back by the company involved in the programme.

The products are then taken to the main factory for final assembly and eventually marketed both locally and abroad.

The programme, which is the brain-child of the governor of Oita prefecture, Morihiko Hiramatsu, was launched in Kubang Pasu in 1992. At present, there are seven such villages in the district.

Dr Mahathir later thanked Japanese companies which have given their support in making the scheme a success.