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Mahathir-Technology

WE ARE TO BLAME IF TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER FAILS

MELAKA, May 3 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the unwillingness of Malaysians to learn new technology from foreign investors is slowing down efforts in technology transfer.

"We cannot blame others if our own people are not prepared to accept new technology," the Prime Minister said.

Speaking to reporters at the end of his two-day working visit to Melaka today, he said the people should not throw unsubstantiated accusations and blame others for not transferring technology.

The government could not blacklist foreign companies for failing to transfer technology based on such accusations because they had to be investigated first, he added.

Asked to comment on claims that there were foreign companies that did not transfer technology and contractors especially from South Korea that did not give out sub-contract work to bumiputera companies, the Prime Minister said the matter needed to be investigated first.

Accusations based on statements made in the press could be true or untrue, he said.

Dr Mahathir said how could the people blame others if the locals themselves were incompetent in accepting and learning technology and new systems that were being brought in.

Asked whether the government would impose conditions in agreements signed with foreign companies to transfer technology used, the Prime Minister said such conditions were not necessary.

"There is no regulation on technology transfer," he said.

On the suggestion that the government defined technology transfer, he said if the people were competent, they would know the meaning of technology transfer.

Dr Mahathir asked whether it was necessary for a worker, like an engineer for example, to ask what needed to be learned whereas the new technology was already brought in for him to implement.

He criticised the attitude of some locals who were given the opportunity to learn and become partners of foreign companies but did not capitalise on it.

"Others are sent to study but did not attend the lectures...others are made business partners but did not employ local workers," he said.

The Prime Minister said he was not accusing anyone in particular but from visits to several projects he found that there were no locals working at the site.

"Almost a hundred per cent of the workers are foreigners...Indonesians, Bangladeshis, Thais and Nigerians but there are no Malays, and a handful of Chinese."

He said how could the people learn new systems if there were contracts using new and sophisticated methods but no locals were working on these projects.

Meanwhile, on the proposal to transfer the manufacturing plant of the light Eagle Aircraft from Perth, Australia to Batu Berendam here, he said the matter was still being studied.

He said preparations to train skilled workers and a study on the aircraft which was being produced in Australia was still going on. --

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