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#### Emphasis on hands-on training

CUKAI, Sat. - Hands-on skills training will be emphasised in the education system because it is easier and readily acceptable by Malaysians, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said hands-on skills training was found to be more effective compared with learning skills through theory. It is also the fastest method of transferring skills.

"I have often stressed on the ability of the people. We are comparable, if not, better than others. In fact in some areas we are better than others, including the more developed races.

"The only problem is the way to transfer the skills to the people. It must be done in a way that is readily acceptable," he told reporters after opening the Terengganu Advanced Technical Institute in Kijal near here.

During a visit to a display of products made by Tati trainees, he observed an exhibit where a ball was rolling within another ball. He said skills involved in making such a product were only known to craftsmen in China, who would carve the balls from ivory.

"At Tati, they used computers to make the product and it took the trainees one year to learn a skill which others took 30 years to learn."

Dr Mahathir said normally engineers would study overseas but when they returned, they could not implement them as they had no practical experience.

Earlier, he toured the centre and was briefed on Tati's operations by its director, Dr Mohd Nawi Derahman.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir commended the State Government for its initiative to develop Tati which had enabled youths from Terengganu and other States to be trained in high precision technology.

He said as industries became more sophisticated, the demand for workers with a high level of skills would increase.

Tati, whose foundation Dr Mahathir laid three years ago, took its first 323 trainees in July last year.

Situated on a 12.14ha site, the RM60 million State-owned institute is aimed at producing skilled manpower in high precision technology.

Among the courses offered are diploma in tool and dye design, diploma in information technology and diploma in mecatronics.

For short-term courses, it offers office automation, computer programming, pneumatics for beginners, non-destructive testing and micro processors.

Tati has established links with Ruane & T.P. O'Neili of United Kingdom to organise short-term courses such as personnel certification in non-destructive testing and a certification scheme for welding inspection personnel.

It is expected to enrol 1,100 trainees by 2000 and 6,000 trainees by 2005.

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