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Mahathir-Technology

GRASP TECHNOLOGY FIRST, MAHATHIR ADVISES MALAYSIANS

SHAH ALAM, April 26 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Malaysians must first understand the technology before acquiring it by way of technology transfer.

"It's up to us whether we want to pursue the technology or not," the Prime Minister told reporters after launching the first locally hand-built sports car "TVR Chimaera" by TVR Sports (M) Sdn Bhd at the Shah Alam racing circuit here.

"We cannot merely wait for people to transfer technology if we are not ready for it as technology transfer involved both parties, and sometimes the other party refused to impart technology," he said when asked to comment on joint ventures with foreign companies to produce cars.

Touching on Chimaera which cost RM240,000 (4.0 litre) and RM266,360 (5.0 litre), Dr Mahathir said he was satisfied with the car which had excellent workmanship quality and conformed with the required standards.

"I feel proud with this achievement as I was told not many component parts were imported. What is most significant the car's body panel made from fibre glass was made locally," he said.

Unlike Lotus sports car which was smaller, Chimaera had the size of a real sports car in terms of design, finishing and comfort for drivers.

"In term of road holding, I find Chimaera up to standard, in fact more than that as it had all the needs of a sports car," he said.

Dr Mahathir said he was proud that Chimaera was a genuine Malaysian-made sports car with the upgrading of engine, manufacturing of the frame, chassis and other parts done locally.

Replying to a question on the failure to manufacture sports cars in Malaysia previously, he said: Yes, there are plans to produce sports cars in Malaysia which failed to materialise. I hope such things do not recur as the project must be a genuine made-in Malaysia sports car."

He said there were also groups which brought in cars from Britain claiming to be Made-In-Malaysia but actually they were old sports cars to be shown here.

As the market for sports cars was limited, Chimaera's production gave Malaysia the chance to learn the engineering, design, structural and other related features, he said.

He said the success of TVR Sports to produce the car was not only an achievement in the sports car industry but also proved the country's talents in the engineering field.

In his speech, TVR Sports chairman Datuk Razali Abdul Rahman said the idea to build a sports car was first mooted by Dr Mahathir during a discussion some years ago.

He said Malaysia could now boast of being a producer of high performance sports cars. "This is a world-class sports car that we can be proud of. Surely, Malaysia has moved another notch up the technology ladder to be able to produce such a high performance handcrafted sportscar."

Right from the start, Razali said, TVR manufactured more than 50 per cent of the car in-house, which included the chassis, the body, seats and interior trims.

"We are embarking on a vendor development programme, starting with 10 selected parts and components manufacturers who will be nurtured as future suppliers. Once this programme matures, we may export components to our United Kingdom partner and we intend to achieve this by 1999," he added. --

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