

# When it's good to think small

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**KUALA LUMPUR, Sat.** — Deputy Prime Minister **Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad** told bumiputra businessmen today that although it is good to think big, it is better to start by thinking small. "It is natural for everyone to want to be a millionaire but this could not be attained overnight, nor through over-ambitious plans," he said.

Speaking at the **Bumiputra Entrepreneurs Convention** at the University of Malaya here, he said there are some entrepreneurs who be-

lieved that as long as they have had feasibility studies done on their projects, the project would do well.

"But feasibility studies do not always guarantee success, not even for Government projects," he added.

"There are many businessmen who make the mistake of applying for huge loans without considering their own financial capabilities and their ability to see the projects through.

"They do not take into account the equity-debt ratio and their ability to pay. Acquiring such huge sums of credit is like working for the banks.

"As a result, when their ventures fail, they not only

lose whatever capital they have but also all the credit granted to them. The net effect is reducing the overall funds available to help bumiputra businessmen," he added.

"Thus it would appear more like encouraging bumiputras to lose whatever capital they have rather than improving their lot."

Being over-ambitious, he said, has been the cause of several bumiputra entrepreneurs' failures.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said in business, nothing is definite and bumiputra entrepreneurs who enter the field should be fully aware that it would not be easy.

"Even well-planned projects fail if the groundwork, like management skills, dedication and diligence, is not laid first.

He said valuable experience in business management could be acquired by starting small-scale business.

"And there are many which are very profitable."

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir also told the participants that they should not only discuss how the Government could assist them further but also how they could help themselves.

On the New Economic Policy, he said assistance provided to bumiputras was in accordance to the policy and was not at the expense of the other communities.

"If the bumiputras become wealthy, so will the others," he added.

The two-day convention attended by more than 200 delegates is organised by the Jalan Haji Hussein Umno branch.