

# 'Big names' don't count, Chinese traders told

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By YEE MEE FAH

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. — Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad told the Chinese business community today that it was not necessary for them to look for VIPs or "big names" as their partners when setting up joint-ventures.

"You should not look to well-known and so-called influential people, including people like me," he said.

He said applications for projects were considered according to its viability and not based on the names or the persons applying for them.

"This," he added, "is the Government's policy."

Datuk Seri Dr.

Mahathir was opening the seminar on "The Future of Small Businesses in the National Economy", organised by the Federal Territory MCA Liaison Committee and the Federation of Selangor Chinese Guilds and Associations.

He said there had been cases when prominent

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bumiputras were invited to participate as a partner in million-dollar projects without even paying a cent.

Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir also stressed that such joint-ventures must also ensure that all parties play equal roles in the effort.

"There should be no

sleeping partners," he added.

He hoped that the Chinese small businessmen would go into more joint-ventures with partners from other communities in the future so that the various communities could progress together.

The Government, he said, believed in promoting a systematic and orderly development of small-scale industries and was looking into ways to assist this sector.

It was also studying a proposal to set up a board, like that of a small-business administration or similar to the Malaysian Industrial Development Authority (Mida).

This board will give assistance to small businesses to enable them to start off in an organised manner.

On the numerous opportunities available, the Deputy Prime Minister said the Government's proposed Heavy Industries Corporation (HIC), with an allocation of \$3 billion to invest in heavy and engineering industries, would have a tremendous amount of "spin-offs."

There would be vast scope for small scale industries to supply component items to each of the projects to be undertaken.