

Change work ethics, Malaysians told

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DATUK Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad

(P)

today called for a change in work ethics among Malaysians that will see the end of perennially delayed and unfinished development projects.

He said it was not a question of money not being available, but the slow government implementation machinery that was causing the numerous delays.

At the end of each five-year Malaysia Plan, "we find only half, sometimes just 40 per cent of the money allocated for development being used."

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, who is on his first official visit to Perak, was speaking at the opening of an Intan-sponsored seminar on Perak's development here this morning.

Stressing the need to increase efficiency and a commitment in working not because of money, but because of pride in one's achievement, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir called on all Malaysians to adopt these twin goals in ensuring the success of the Government's development plans.

He said the question that prevailed now was

not one of decision-making or formulating a development policy that the Government should pursue.

What was needed, he said, was a change in the people's work ethics to ensure that no more projects remain unfinished or delayed.

He said while other countries had to beg for aid for their development programmes, Malaysia had its own money to finance them.

"We have allocated money for the projects, and yet, we still could not reach our targets, because of lack of efficiency and a commitment to work.

"We must increase our efficiency and our ability in implementing all the projects planned."

He said although Malaysia was made up of moderate people who had brought stability to the country, where work was concerned, "we need to be more than moderate. We have to be diligent and be ready to work hard ... not for financial reward, but for pride in one's achievement."

By ZAINAH ANWAR: Ipoh, Thurs.

This value, he said, was lacking in the country, when compared to the Japanese and South Koreans with their different work ethics.

Speaking off the cuff, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir drew laughter when he told tales of Japanese wives who are ashamed when their husbands come home from work early because the neighbours would then say that it is because their men are not important to their firm or government, that is why they do not have to work into the night.

Korean boss

But in Malaysia, he quipped, the men go home at 3.30 and they sheepishly say it is because they do not want to exacerbate the traffic jam at 4 pm.

Turning to South Korea, where the work ethics dictate that the workers do not go home until the boss goes, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir lamented that if Malaysians were to follow this example, it would be very dangerous "because our bosses go

home early."

"I'm trying to be like the Korean boss. I go home late, but unfortunately, I've found that I'm the only one who goes back late."

He said he was increasing his efficiency not because of the big pay that came with the Prime Minister's job, but because he wanted to be proud of the nation, so that "when we talk, people will take us seriously."

"We want others to say that when Malaysia

talks, it means that they can do it. They're not mouthing mere words," he added.

He said there should also be an end to remarks such as "the lazy Malay, the indolent Malay" or comments such as "look at Singapore. In Malaysia you go to the office at 8 and no one is there."

There should come the time when people would say, "A h, Malaysia ... Number One," said Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, drawing cheers as he said in Japanese, the common reference to Japan and its economic miracle.