

# Window-dressing

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# way to win business

**KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said it is time bumiputra contractors use "window-dressing" to get business from the private sector.**

If non-bumiputra companies have Malay partners and workers as whitewash to get Government contracts, he said, there is no reason bumiputra firms cannot get non-bumiputra partners and workers to get into the private sector.

This is the Baba-Lee approach, he said — an Ali Baba in reverse. But bumiputras must do the work.

The Prime Minister was speaking at the opening of a three-day seminar for bumiputra contractors organised by the Government-bumiputra contractor liaison agency, Pusakabumi, Mara and the National Productivity Centre.

The "window-dressing" strategy is inevitable in any business, and bumiputra contractors should consider it to gain tenders from the private sector, which he said, is controlled by people unsympathetic to bumiputra needs.

He added that they should also use the psychology of money to get business from the sector.

Although the sector is not particularly sympathetic, it nevertheless cares about money and keeping costs down.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said if bumiputra contractors could offer tenders which were not only low in costs but were coupled with expertise, then they could gain a foot in the door of the

private sector.

He added that they should not depend on Government contracts alone for if they did, they would forever remain "mere extensions of the Public Works Department and an unofficial Government agency."

The real measure of success of bumiputra contractors would be when they get work from the private sector based on their skill and low tenders.

He urged bumiputra contractors to soldier on despite losses in order to attain higher credibility, especially from the private sector.

They should not "run" each time any of their projects looked like losing money.

The Prime Minister also warned that if bumiputra contractors get into the habit of abandoning projects every time they feared it would result in financial losses, they would not be awarded any more tenders.

## 'Runners'

"Nobody wants to award projects to contractors with a reputation of being 'runners'," he said.

On turn-key projects, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said he hoped that one day these could be awarded to bumiputra firms.

At the moment, foreign companies given the tenders for large projects have to work with a

Malaysian partner which has a 30 per cent bumiputra interest.

Bumiputras should learn management techniques and other matters related to the running of major development projects, he added.

Earlier, Pusakabumi director Encik Halim Salam urged the Government to consider waiving the two-year suspension on contractors who abandon projects because of difficulties.

He said this is necessary to save the contractor as well as projects of socio-economic interests.

Contractors who face problems should be allowed to withdraw from a contract and not be suspended, especially if they had other projects to work on as well, he said.