

Doing things well for the nation's good

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GENTING HIGHLANDS, Sat. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad stressed tonight the need for Malaysians to appreciate quality in whatever they do.

He said government servants "should deliver not just service but quality service."

"This kind of service should not be confined to MAS cabin crews only but should be standard for all government services," he said at the dinner here of the Harvard Business School Alumni Club of Malaysia.

The Prime Minister said quality control should be the concern of the Government as much

managerial expertise.

"There is a need, therefore, for more managers to be trained and for the skills of existing managers to be upgraded," he added.

He said no organisation, whether public or private, could function, much less succeed, without good managers.

Malaysia, being at a stage of rapid development, was in need of them but "unfortunately, we do not have sufficient good managers."

He said the Government was particularly feeling the shortage of trained managers as it continued to be actively engaged in business, running numerous agencies, statutory bodies and corporations.

On the private sector, he said the managers were too fond of passing on more complex business matters to managers in neighbouring countries.

Advantage

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said Malaysian managers were also weak in product development, production and marketing.

This could be proven, he said, by the fact that most of the country's produce was marketed by firms in other nations and that frequently products manufactured locally from Malaysian raw

materials were incapable of competing in the world markets with similar products using the same Malaysian raw materials but manufactured in other countries.

He said Malaysians should work towards "the day when our products will never be questioned where quality is concerned."

"Our raw materials have established this reputation but we cannot say that our manufactured products have approached this stage yet," he said.

Growth

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said this was where good management must play a role. Good managers, he added, must devote time and efforts towards the establishment of quality and better quality all the time.

He said Malaysians must also strive to increase their productivity but this did not mean they could ignore quality.

"Quality must not only be achieved and maintained but it must be improved all the time," he said.

"There was a time when quality was synonymous with higher prices. It need not be so.

"Good quality can be had even as prices are reduced," he said.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir also said the growth of Malaysian industry and business has been stifled by mediocre management and added that government plans were also being hampered by a shortage of trained managers.

He said the private sector was not as aggressive and successful as those in other developing countries in the region due to inadequate

materials were incapable of competing in the world markets with similar products using the same Malaysian raw materials but manufactured in other countries.

"It would seem that we cannot manage well even when we have a distinct advantage," he said.

He said the country "simply needed to have more trained managers and better management skills."

"A man who is asked to manage is not necessarily a manager. He is just a glorified employee.

"A manager manages for the success of his organisation, not himself," said Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir.

He said managers should also strive to increase their own productivity and that of their organisations for "if we are going to maintain our position in whatever field, we have to increase productivity all the time."

Managers must know all the ways and means of increasing productivity and they must also be innovative.

"The important thing is not to identify the causes (which really means the excuses) but to seek out the managers' own weaknesses and their own contribution to productivity or the lack of it," he said.

He said if managers corrected their own weakness then automatically they would be able to manage for greater productivity of the organisation under them.