

No place for 'bidan tarik' in business

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — Delegates at Umno's general assembly were not surprised when the party president stressed the need for "knowledgeable managers" in the political field and for full business management expertise in statutory bodies and public corporations.

"The Government's economic agencies must no longer be filled with just any Tom, Dick or Harry that can be found to manage them," said Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"We can no longer depend on the proverbial 'bidan tarik' (women roped in to deliver a baby when there are no qualified midwives around).

"We need knowl-

edgeable managers — not only in the economic field but also in the nation's politics.

"When economic organisations were set up to fill the requirements of the New Economic Policy, too often we appointed politicians as chairmen and administrative officers as managers. Both were usually devoid of experience or training in the field of management.

"While some of those appointed in this way could master business management very fast, many failed. The effect of this failure was to delay the successful implementation of the New Economic Policy," said Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir.

He noted that often these organisations obstructed the growth of bumiputra companies.

"Today we have put an end to management a la 'bidan tarik.' We want statutory bodies and corporations to be run by managers who are more professional and are aware of policies and political targets, particularly of the New Economic Policy."

Politicians who are interested in joining the Government must understand that not all of them are needed in administration, he said.

"Some are needed in the economic field as chairmen, board members or managers. Their participation in the economic field, especially in Government-owned companies, is as important as their participation in the Government administration.

"We do not want the

participation of politicians in Government-owned economic bodies to be a 'job for the boys.' Do not think that because we have served long in politics we must be given posts. There is nothing more dangerous than giving a post to someone without the expertise. To fulfil political needs in economics, therefore, the politicians interested must learn and master business management.

"When they have acquired the necessary skills, they must regard their roles in economic activity as being no less important than the roles of their friends who have been given places in the administration.

"For us, politics is a means, not an end. The end is greater happiness in life.

"At the same time, managers from non-political backgrounds must enhance their knowledge of politics. We do not wish to replace them with politicians. We only wish to suit the management to the political realities in Malaysia."

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir expressed the hope that politicians will realise the role of economics in the nation's politics and in its happiness and well-being.

"Those who really fight for the interests of our people, religion and nation must not yearn for political posts alone, but must be prepared to play a part in the economic field, he said.