

Don't just go for the ride

PM to businessmen accompanying him on overseas trips

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PARIT BUNTAR, Sat. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, today criticised Malaysian businessmen who competed for places on his trade missions abroad but failed to follow up on the contacts they made or the opportunities created.

He said many of these businessmen seemed to treat the trips as mere "holidays."

Speaking at the opening of the activated bleaching earth and sulphuric acid plants of Wembley Activated Clay Sdn Bhd here, he said: "When I want to go overseas a lot of people want to follow, saying they want to look for busi-

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ness opportunities but on returning home there is no follow-up at all.

"It looks like those who went with me went for a holiday. This does not profit us. I hope when they go overseas they will make full use of the business opportunities and increase our exports."

He said 400 people wanted to follow him on his trip to China in November to improve trade relations.

"We might have to charter a Boeing 747 to accommodate them.

"I'm afraid their going might not bring us any profit. We will therefore select those really interested in trade. We don't want mere holiday makers."

The Prime Minister also drew laughter by saying there were at pre-

sent too many people interested in becoming "towkays" but who did not want to work.

"It is like the saying: Too many chiefs, not enough Indians. If there are many generals but no privates you can't do business.

"Those who want to be managers should be workers first to get the experience so important for the success of a business.

"No one should feel they don't have to work just because they come from the university or higher institution of learning."

Dr Mahathir said some businessmen might feel it was easy to get capital from Mara.

"If they make a profit it is all right but if they lose they demand more loans from Mara," he said.