

# PM urges businessmen to believe in sincerity of the Government

# The key to recovery

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**KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — The Prime Minister today asked businessmen to believe in the sincerity of the Government, saying this was "essential" to economic recovery.**

In his keynote address at a conference here organised by the Malaysian Institute of Management (MIM), Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said:

"If there is going to be economic recovery in this country, the first thing — the most essential thing, in fact — is for the business community to accept the sincerity of the Government's intention to work for the economic prosperity of this country.

"With that acceptance, Government-private sector co-operation will become a reality. This Government is the most accessible in the region, if not the world."

About 70 senior private sector managers are attending the conference, publicised as a

"ministerial briefing towards national economic recovery."

Dr Mahathir urged businessmen to be positive when analysing policies and reminded them that the Government had accommodated many of their suggestions over the years.

"Please do not be negative.

"Don't start tearing to pieces Government policies the moment they are announced, as happened with the Look East Policy.

## Poverty-eradication

"If Malaysia is to recover, let us be positive. Let us be ready to try new ideas. Let us improvise along the way if something fails.

"There are no perfect ideas or perfect solutions. But positive people improve on them as they go along."

Dr Mahathir also said the Government would continue with the New Economic Policy (NEP), the Look East and privatisation

policies because they were basically sound.

He said the NEP was a major instrument for achieving all-round stability.

Dr Mahathir said if recent events were anything to go by, the stability of Malaysia could be quite easily undermined.

Without political stability, he added, the economy could not grow or expand.

"The choice is really between a slightly slow economic growth with the constraints of the NEP and an uncertain growth under distinctly unstable conditions.

"Malaysia has no choice but to choose the NEP and try to manage the constraints," he said.

He also said the Government recently decided to soft-pedal the NEP equity aspect in favour of jobs for the unemployed.

Jobs for the unemployed, he said, were part of poverty-eradication adding that the Government could not sacrifice jobs for the poor in favour of shares for the well-to-do.

He gave an assurance that once the economic cake grew, the Government would focus on share distribution.

The NEP, he added, should not now be a hindrance to economic recovery.

On the Look East policy, Dr Mahathir said the Government was committed to promoting the work ethics of the East among the Malaysian workforce.

He regretted that despite innumerable clarifications that the policy meant learning Japanese and Korean work ethics and management methods, many still insisted that it meant giving contracts and buying goods from the Japanese and Koreans.

He said even the Americans and the Europeans were looking towards the East for better work ethics and management approaches but some Malaysians still felt that they could learn only from the "infallible Mat Salleh".

"Actually, it is the ethics of

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## Dr M: We need work ethics of the successful

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the Mat Sallehs which are dragging us down even as our neighbours race past us to achieve better growth."

Dr Mahathir said whether Malaysians liked it or not, it was their work ethics which were dragging them down.

This, he added, must be corrected through acquiring the work ethics of the successful -- the East.

On the privatisation of Government agencies and projects, Dr Mahathir said the private sector was now both willing and able to take on these projects.

Through privatisation the Government would at the very least be relieved of running costs and subsidies, and the money thus saved could be used for more development which would help stimulate the economy.

In addition, he said the reduced Government bureaucracy could be better paid by the Government.

Dr Mahathir also said that companies and facilities which had been privatised had attained better returns besides giving better service.

He said there had been quite a few problems but these were bound to occur considering the newness of the approach.

"It is strange that when the Government runs a facility, there are innumerable complaints. But when the Government proposes to privatise the facility, suddenly some people find so much virtue in Government management," he added.