

Advice to Malay traders

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — Bumiputera businessmen were today reminded they should not be too dependant on the Government for help and to manage their businesses better if they hoped to succeed.

They should also pay more attention to the details of their businesses rather than just think of the size of their businesses, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad added.

They should not think that they could succeed because they had

the capital, business opportunities and places to operate.

Dr Mahathir said this change of attitude was necessary if the Government was to achieve the objectives of the New Economic Policy.

Some success

He was opening a seven-day *Eksponiaga* — an exhibition of goods made by Bumiputera companies and firms with Bumiputera participation — at the Putra World Trade Centre.

He said although the Government had tried to achieve

economic equality for Bumiputeras through its policies and programmes over the last 30 years, the results had not met the expectations.

"There has been some success and this expo proves it, but this success has not been to the level we hoped to achieve through the NEP which states that at least 30 per cent of the country's wealth should belong to the Bumiputeras. This is not because we did not try, but because of the recess-

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sion in recent years," he said.

It was, therefore, important to study why this 30 per cent objective had not been achieved, he said, adding that the blame lay with both the Government and the Bumiputeras.

"The Government is afraid of the people ... that it will not get their votes, so it gives them whatever they want even if they don't ask. There are Members of Parliament who spend a lot of time thinking of what to give the Bumiputeras next," Dr Mahathir said.

He said in the past, the Government had spoilt the Bumiputeras by creating an environment which was too soft and did not test the strength of the Bumiputeras by eliminating the weak and strengthening the strong.

"Instead, the strong also became weak because the environment did not test their true strength," he said.

"Don't rush into a business just because you see other people succeed. These people could have succeeded because they have managed (their businesses) well, and not just because

of the place or opportunity.

"Now, the Bumiputera businessmen think they can do business without having any capital."

Some did not select businesses for which they are suited but were more concerned with the size of the businesses.

"We have even received a request from a businessman who wanted to manage a fleet of 20 fishing ships but when we checked, we found that he had never caught a single fish. He was a former Government employee and did not have any capital," Dr Mahathir added.