

# PM: THINK BIG MAY NOT BE WISE THINKING

By Zulkifli Talib

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that aspiring entrepreneurs should not make the mistake of "thinking big" when starting a business.

The Prime Minister said they should take "things one step at a time" and not rush ahead to make fast profits.

"I suggest that before any businessman starts to think big he should start out small first and progressively go ahead from there to identify and rectify his weaknesses and acquire the necessary skills needed to expand," Dr Mahathir said when opening a national symposium of Malaysian women entrepreneurs.

"Plan things out properly. Take things a step at a time. Or else the aspiring entrepreneur may find that he has more prob-

lems than he can handle. We should know what our weaknesses are. If we do not, we will not be able to solve problems faced by entrepreneurs," he added.

Dr Mahathir said the Government had, in the past, made the mistake of calling on bumiputra businessmen to "think big" when starting out.

"When the Government urged them to think big, it was with the hope that they would be able to compete with other races but many of them thought only of making big profits without realising losses too could be big," he said.

Dr Mahathir also urged businessmen to look East and emulate the work attitudes and values of businessmen from Japan, South Korea and Taiwan.

He said management skills and good ethics and values were among the qualities found among successful entrepreneurs.

He criticised bumipu-

tras who wasted the benefits and facilities provided to them, saying that because of this they were unable to reach the 30 per cent target in the NEP.

Dr Mahathir cited as example the sale of shares allocated to bumiputras and said that bumiputras should hold on to the shares to help the Government achieve its policies rather than sell them for quick profits.

On women entrepreneurs, Dr Mahathir said that although the Government did not have a policy solely for them, it did not mean that they were not given any attention.

He added that women entrepreneurs had earned the attention of the Government because the Government "depends more on women entrepreneurs than men entrepreneurs."

"This is because from my observation I found that women entrepreneurs suffered less or had

less problems during the recession than their counterparts," he said.

The three-day symposium is organised by the Federal Territory and Selangor Association of Bumiputra Women in Business and Profession (Peniagaawati) and is sponsored by the Canadian International Development Agency.

Among the participants are some of the most successful women entrepreneurs in Asean.

They include P.T Blue group chairman Mutiara Djokosutono, whose company operates 1,500 taxis in Indonesia, and Thailand's Surapee Rojanavongse, who is chairman and director of several companies and foundations involved in activities ranging from tourism to real estate.

Among the speakers is the trustee and president of the Women's World Bank Michaela Walsh.

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