

# There's no short cut to success, PM tells Bumi traders

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THE huge investments made by the Government to create successful Bumiputera businessmen, especially during the 1971-90 New Economic Policy period, have not produced the desired results.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said in Kuala Lumpur yesterday that lack of capital and government assistance are often cited as the main factors contributing towards the failure of Bumiputera business ventures, but these are not the main causes.

What is lacking are management and financial expertise and the right attitude; at present patience and gradual business growth comes second to becoming rich fast.

To make matters worse a lot of Bumiputera businesses still have not won the confidence of Malaysian consumers, including Bumiputeras themselves. Thus, they continue to be over-dependent

**PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has expressed concern over a news report that three out of every 10 foreign workers who underwent the medical check-up for their work permit were found to be human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) carriers. "I am worried... I do not know whether we have carried out a comprehensive examination... but if three out of 10 people (are HIV carriers), this is very serious," he told newsmen in Lumpur yesterday.**  
— Bernama

on government contracts for survival.

"They (Bumiputeras) made the generalisation that anybody can go into business if they have the interest. The fact that businessmen need to have special training is not emphasised.

"And that business acumen can be learned, and not only acquired through experience, has not been emphasised either," he said at the launching of Perbadanan Usahawan Nasional Bhd (PUNB), a wholly owned subsidiary of Yayasan Pelaburan Bumiputera whose main objective is to create a resilient Bumiputera Commercial and Industrial Community (BCIC).

Dr Mahathir said difficulties in securing capital was once identified as the main reason for the lack of Bumiputera participation in business. The colonial government even acknowledged this by setting up the Rural Industrial Development Authority (Rida) with a \$5 million capital in the 1950s.

Rida, eventually became Mara, and more funds were channelled to the Bumiputera business community, but without much success.

"They thought they could become successful businessmen with interest alone, that knowledge was unimportant. Once a contract or permit was secured, they could seek the necessary funds and get straight into business.

"Some of them might have succeeded through this trial and error process, but many of them failed. Those previously not in debt found themselves in debt, some were even declared bankrupt. Instead of moving forward, they went backward.

"The overall Bumiputera

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economy has been affected by this," he said.

Many of them, too, feel that it is the responsibility of the Government to provide quotas or continue accepting business from Bumiputeras. "This is not the right approach. It only points to the fact that they cannot overcome their own weaknesses."

The Prime Minister said Bumiputera entrepreneurs should be wiser now and accept the fact that there is no short cut to success. Patience, he added, is one ingredient that needs to be inculcated.

A business normally undergoes growth gradually and profits made in the early years should be reinvested for further expansion or

serve as a safety net during rainy days.

Incurring losses during the initial years is quite normal, especially for those businesses with a long gestation period. Without patience, one can never run a big business operation.

"Many Bumiputeras who don't have the patience and confidence sell their license, contract and shares for quick returns. In the end the buyers who have the patience to wait will make more profit.

"So long as the get-rich-quick attitude prevails, Bumiputeras will fail in economic activities," he said.

To overcome some of these weaknesses the Government has set up a university catering especially for management courses.—By Azam Aris