

# SUPPLIERS ARE ALSO CONSUMERS

By ROHAIZAD A RAHIM

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Suppliers of goods and services should put themselves in the shoes of consumers because that's what they are.

This advice from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is also meant to minimise consumer-related complaints.

He said: "A fact often forgotten is that a supplier and a consumer is one and the same person."

The Prime Minister was speaking at the launching of this year's World Consumers Day which was witnessed by Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Abu Hassan Omar and representatives of various consumer associations throughout the country (see Page 6).

Dr Mahathir said by putting themselves in that position, suppliers could better assess consumers' needs.

He said problems related to consumers often surfaced due to what he termed as a consumer's dual personality.

Dr Mahathir said consumers often expected the best out of products or services but when the role was reversed, they neglected quality.

"When a consumer reverses his role (to be a supplier) he tends to forget to maintain the quality of products or services needed by the public."

He said this often happened when the consumer — like reporters, super-

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visors or shophelpers — tended to give little attention to the services they provided but became more critical when the role was reversed.

He said if everybody, be they consumers or suppliers, assumed the dual personality, it could minimise problems.

Dr Mahathir also called on consumer associations to be more careful before making any accusations against suppliers.

He said they should take action only when they could prove that there was profiteering.

In this respect, he said the Government was willing to assist and co-operate with the associations.

He added that consumers should also be more responsible and not waste money unnecessarily on products of doubtful quality.

"As consumers become more affluent, they should also be more thrifty and demand the best out of a product in terms of quality and price.

"If they have too much money due to increase in income, then it is better to invest it, like in the Malaysia Bond."

Dr Mahathir also said the interest of consumers could be maintained by the Government and the private sector through control of cost and quality through the enhancement of production efficiency.

He said producers, distributors and wholesalers must realise that the Government's control measures would not only benefit consumers but also them.