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Mahathir-Charter (With pix)

FULFIL PLEDGES IN CLIENTS CHARTER, MAHATHIR TELLS GOVT. DEPTS.

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KUALA LUMPUR, June 2⁹⁴ (Bernama) -- All government departments and agencies must fulfil the pledges in their Clients Charter to win the trust and confidence of the people, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The pledges should not become mere slogans which would cause the people to lose faith in the sincerity and efficiency of government departments, he added.

Officially opening the Public Services Department complex here, he said emphasis needed to be given to this matter because the duties performed by public servants were important and had an impact on the people.

"In this context, public service staff must give priority to public interest rather than their own and carry out their work with sincerity, fairness, responsibility and efficiency," he added.

In addition, there must be accountability among all public servants in whatever they did in order to safeguard their credibility as a government machinery, he said. -- more

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Theirs was the responsibility to deal with the day-to-day matters and problems of the people as well as to interpret and implement all government policies and approaches to expedite economic growth, enforce the law and create an atmosphere conducive to peace and solidarity, he added.

Dr Mahathir reminded public service staff of the need to be sensitive to the changes taking place among clients, workers, the private sector and information systems.

"Public service clients are now more educated and hold higher hopes for quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the service provided," he said.

He said customers today had greater awareness of their rights to fairer and more reasonable service, including the time taken to get something done.

Dr Mahathir said the public service still played an important role in national development although its role as the engine of growth had been taken over by the private sector. -- more

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The public service now acted as co-ordinator and facilitator in a number of matters, like providing support and supervision to the private sector, development management machinery, social and physical infrastructure support, disburser of funds and the linkage between various parties, he added.

To further upgrade public service, Dr Mahathir underlined the importance of continuity in carrying out change, and he suggested that the Japanese concept of "Kaizen" be made part of the Malaysian work culture.

Under the concept, which calls for continuing improvement in performance, Japanese industries were able to produce goods of ever-increasing quality which even surpassed those produced by other countries.

"We need not wait five or ten years to institute change after the last change was introduced. Every member of the public service must always think and plan to improve work procedures and service," he said.

Turning to the challenges facing the public service today, Dr Mahathir said officers attending international conference must have the courage to voice Malaysia's stand loudly and clearly to uphold the country's honour and interests. -- more

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For, Malaysia was at a critical crossroad as Muslim countries were now targets in the world political arena and greater attention was being focussed on Pacific Rim countries as a result of its rapid economic growth, he added.

Towards upgrading staff capabilities, Dr Mahathir wanted heads of department to inculcate the spirit of a caring service in line with the concept of a caring society by paying more attention to the problems raised by their staff and organised labour.

The caring attitude among department heads would create a sense of satisfaction among their staff and, thus, enhance productivity, he said.

Dr Mahathir also underscored the importance for staff training with emphasis on attitude to work through a curriculum that could fulfil current and future needs besides encouraging the reading habit.

He described the PSD's new RM70 million building as signifying a new era in its history; all of its divisions were now housed under one roof. -- more

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He commended the Public Works Department for its success in presenting an attractive design that was a departure from the box-like structures of other government buildings.

Speaking to reporters afterwards, Dr Mahathir said the government was now able to spend a bit more for such buildings in view of the country's improving economy.

The design of future government buildings would incorporate the nation's cultural elements in order to create "an identity of our own," that was different from that found in other countries, he added.

He also said the "Kaizen" concept, introduced four years ago, had brought much positive change.

He was also happy with the increase in quality of public services in general.

International organisations had recommended that the PSD serve as a model for several countries, he said. "This is testimony of our success."

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