

Win the people's trust, PM tells public servants

By K.P. Waran and
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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. — Public servants must be accountable for all their actions in order to safeguard their credibility as the machinery of the government, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister also advised them to give priority to public interest rather than to their own and to carry out their work with sincerity, fairness, responsibility and efficiency.

Opening the Public Services Department complex here, he said the scenario under which the public services operated now was very different from 30 years ago, including the types of clients, the workers, the private sector and the information systems.

"The clients of the public service are more educated and their expectations of quality, efficiency and effective service are higher. They are aware of their rights to be served justly and fairly by government agencies.

"They want accurate information on requirements

and regulations that have to be fulfilled to get a service done and therefore it is important for government departments and agencies to fulfil the pledges in their Clients Charter to win the trust and confidence of the people," he said.

He said the pledges should not become mere slogans which would cause the people to lose faith in the sincerity and efficiency of government departments. He said the duties performed by public servants were important and had an impact on the people.

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.

He said the public service now acted as co-ordinator and facilitator in a number of matters, including providing support and supervision to the private sector, development management machinery, social and physical infrastructure support and disbursement of funds.

To further upgrade public service, he said there was a need to have continuity in

carrying out change and 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 are able to produce goods of ever-increasing quality that have even surpassed those produced by other countries.

"We need not wait five or 10 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.

Dr Mahathir called on 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.

He said a caring attitude among department heads would create a sense of satisfaction among their staff and, therefore, enhance productivity.

Speaking to reporters later, he said the "Kaizen" concept, introduced four years ago, had brought much posi-

tive change and expressed happiness with the increase in quality of public services in general.

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

Dr Mahathir said the government has approved the structural plan for the Perang Besar new township about eight kilometres north of the new international airport at Sepang where most of the federal government departments including the Prime Minister's Department would be relocated eventually.

"The government has approved the structural plan for Perang Besar," he said, adding that once the building plans were ready, construction work would begin.

The new Public Service Department Complex located on a 17-acre site in Jalan Tun Ismail was completed in October last year at a cost of RM70 million. It houses the main divisions of the PSD with the exception of

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Praise for department

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the National Institute of Public Administration (Intan) which is located at Bukit Kiara.

Dr Mahathir praised the Public Works Department for the innovative design of the complex which he said was not only more attractive, but more conducive to a working environment compared to the "cigarette box" design of yesteryears.

The Prime Minister also visited an exhibition on the history of the PSD as well as its services and current activities before touring the complex.