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Mahathir-Business

BUSINESS SECTOR TOLD TO CHANGE IN TANDEM WITH ECONOMIC GROWTH

MELAKA, May 2 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the commercial sector need to adapt to the rapid economic growth and clients' demands.

"The people's tastes have changed ... they want a comfortable and modern living in all aspects and will not be satisfied with shoddy service," the Prime Minister said.

Small-scale businesses and sole proprietor type of businesses were no longer relevant to the present times and the requirements of a developed society, he said when launching the Pulau Melaka land reclamation and development project in Bandar Hilir here.

He said such businesses must be turned into big enterprises through joint-ventures, partnership or equity ownership.

"We cannot stick to the old ways any more because we can achieve more rapid progress if we change," he said.

Dr Mahathir said lodging house type of accommodation was popular in the past but businessmen who continued with such business would not have many customers now.

"They must switch to providing budget or luxury hotels to meet the current demands of the people and tourists," he said.

In this respect, the country had also diversified from solely relying on rubber and tin to industries and tourism, he said.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia is respected for its ability to develop and administer the country more efficiently than the colonial ruler, unlike certain countries which prospered under colonial rule but lagged behind after they achieved independence.

On the Pulau Melaka project, the Prime Minister said it is an example of the changes he advocated as the developer has diversified his business from tin mining to become a well-known property developer.

Larut Consolidated Berhad and Talam Corporation Berhad, through their joint-venture company Inno-Enhance Sdn Bhd, would invest RM2 billion on the 100ha integrated project comprising commercial complex, hotel, marina, condominium and housing development.

Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Zin Abdul Ghani said the state government would only allow sea reclamation projects to be carried out along swampy and muddy coastal areas.

Although such projects are necessary for development, priority will be given to environmental conservation and protection of the interest of local fishermen, he said.

Mohamed Zin said the state government would try to avoid acquiring private land for development since many swampy and muddy coastal areas have been identified as suitable to be reclaimed, such as the Pulau Melaka project.

He said the people affected by development along coastal areas would be provided opportunities and assistance to take part in suitable ventures consistent with the surrounding development. -- BERNAMA

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