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Dr M: We need to adopt culture of maintenance

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KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today advised Malaysians to adopt "the culture of maintenance" in their lifestyles so that properties remain in good conditions.

Dr Mahathir said he had observed that Malaysians lacked the culture of maintenance resulting in properties, including Government buildings, aircraft and ships being left in sorry state.

The Prime Minister said he had directed the Defence Ministry at a recent Cabinet meeting to instil the culture of maintenance in the Royal Malaysian Navy.

"Quite a number of Malaysians own mega yachts, but almost invariably, the crew are Europeans.

"The reason for that is Malaysians and Asians in general, do not know how to maintain yachts.

"If the culture of maintenance is not there, dirt, saltwater and all that will accumulate and affect the yacht," he said.

Dr Mahathir said yacht owners found it worthwhile to hire Europeans to maintain their yachts than to hire locals and pay high expenses for repairs arising from poor maintenance.

He was speaking to reporters after launching the maiden delivery of the Malaysia-made SME MD3-160 aircraft, ordered by the United States.

The launching ceremony was held at the SME Aviation in Subang.

Similarly, Dr Mahathir said there was a need to develop a culture that placed high priority on aircraft maintenance.

He said if local aircraft manufacturers could maintain aircraft over a longer period, only then could they claim to have mastered the art of maintaining such sophisticated equipment.

Dr Mahathir said when he was in Britain last year, he noticed a 50-year-old aircraft which should have been written off was still being used in good condition due to good maintenance.

"This shows a degree of love by the people who owned the aircraft.

"This is the kind of culture that we have yet to acquire. If we want to be an industrialised nation, we have to develop this culture," he said.

Dr Mahathir said maintaining aircraft was not an easy task because even the simplest mistake could be disastrous.

The Prime Minister said even the maintenance of Government buildings was not up to standards.

"Government officers want beautiful buildings. When we give them beautiful buildings complete with ponds and fountains, they are not maintained.

"Sometimes the ponds run dry and the fountains are no longer working. The ponds will be dirty and filled with cigarette butts.

"Very soon the ponds crack up and the mosaic comes off," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysians had to get rid of such an attitude.

"It is not inborn and not part of the physical make up. It is our behaviour.

"But we can change. We have been changing all this while. We have changed from padi farmers and fishermen to those who build aircraft."

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