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PM CULTURE

PM ON NEED FOR M'SIANS TO HAVE GOOD MAINTENANCE CULTURE

PETALING JAYA, Dec 1 (Bernama) -- A culture of good maintenance needs to be instilled among Malaysians as the country moves into more sophisticated areas, especially in the aircraft manufacturing and maintenance sectors, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today.

In the case of aircraft maintenance, he said everything must be perfect.

"We are concerned whenever we hear of crashes involving Malaysian aircraft...it is important to give the aircraft good flying conditions, which means we have to be meticulous. The slightest failure could lead to fatal consequences," he said at the launch of SME Aviation Sdn Bhd's made-in-Malaysia aircraft known as "Aerotiga (SME MD-160).

The aircraft has been fully certified for export to the United States.

The prime minister said one could not afford to make mistakes at all in these critical areas.

"Everything must be right all the time. One must check and re-check so that the products and maintenance are up to the mark," he said.

Dr Mahathir also cited the example of a number of Malaysians who owned yachts and had to engage European crew.

He said this was because most Malaysians did not know how to maintain yachts properly.

Dr Mahathir said although it was more costly to hire Europeans, they were worth the money because they knew how to maintain the yachts.

He said the culture of good maintenance was not practised widely among Malaysians, adding that the Malaysian standard of maintenance was still not there.

The difference between the Europeans and Malaysians was that European culture stressed that everything must be clean, precise and maintained 100 percent up to the required standard, he said.

Asked whether the lack of maintenance capability among Malaysians was due to lack of skills, Dr Mahathir replied, "There is no question of skills. Skills we can acquire. Malaysians have the capacity to acquire any skill but the culture of expecting the best quality is not there.

"The culture of maintenance is not inborn. It is not part of our physical make up but we can change. We have changed all these years. The people who once planted paddy and caught fish are the same people who are now building aircraft."

Dr Mahathir congratulated SME Aviation for producing and exporting aircraft.

He said 10 to 15 years ago Malaysians did not think that they could produce aircraft that could be exported to developed countries.

"However, today this has become a reality," he added.

Saying that he was confident that the country could achieve much success in the aeronautics field, he cautioned that Malaysia should not be overly-ambitious in wanting to produce large and sophisticated aircraft.

He said the country's progress must be in line with its achievements.

Dr Mahathir said even if Malaysia could not build very large and sophisticated aircraft, it could still manufacture vital components and parts for them. -- BERNAMA

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