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First Saturday holiday not for service industry

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I AM dismayed to see those in the service industry like commercial banks and finance companies closing shop on the first Saturday of each month.

It must be noted that government servants have been fighting for a five-day week for a long time but the leadership of the Government, particularly our Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had positively turned down the request because the productivity of the nation would be affected especially since we are a developing country.

However, Dr Mahathir has recently relented even though the country is in severe economic downturn, the worst ever witnessed by us.

He knows that he and his Government would not be able to do much for government servants in the coming years by way of a salary revision owing to the current severe recession and decided to give a small gift to government servants to rest an extra day each month.

This does not mean that the private sector should follow suit. The rationale is different.

We in the private sector have to work doubly hard for a speedier recovery of the economy.

It is unimaginable that those in the service sector like banks and finance companies should also close shop on the first Saturday.

Realistically speaking, they should be open for business to take advantage of the nearly one million civil servants doing their transactions on the first Saturday thereby enhancing their business.

Further, it is an irony that Tenaga Nasional Bhd is closing shop for two Saturdays. TNB still seems to have the government agency syndrome even though it has been a private sector organisation for a long time now.

I therefore call upon the private sector not to close on the first Saturday of each month but use the day as an opportunity to do more business and increase productivity for the country as envisaged by the Prime Minister.