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Chance for ex-army men to try their hand at business

By R. MANIRAJAN

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues: Former army personnel will be given the opportunity to take part in the franchise and retail trades in new townships.

"If they are interested, we will give them assistance in terms of training, capital and other services," Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The offer of this help comes after the Prime Minister's meeting recently with senior army officers who will be retiring soon.

This offer, naturally, is made to all bumiautras who are interested in doing business as well, Mahathir said at a dialogue session with bumiputra entrepreneurs at the Putra World Trade Centre here today.

Held for the first time with the Prime Minister, the dialogue session was arranged by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry.

Mahathir said there were many opportunities like the mini-market business, laundry service, bakery, confectionery, and photo shops available to bumiputras if they can properly manage them.

However, "bumiputras are not interested in the sundry business as they are more interested in getting contracts, AP permits or want to be agents instead, as these require less management expertise", he added.

Mahathir later had a two-hour closed-door session with about 1,500 bumiputra entrepreneurs.

He also received many memoranda from people in the various industries and answered about 100 questions from the floor.