

Work to boost business confidence: PM

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Need to counter negative views, community told

By **Ferida Abdul Kudhus**

GENTING HIGHLANDS, Sun: It is important for the business community to work together with the government to boost business and consumer confidence and counter negative economic sentiments.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said this is because since the East Asian economic crisis in 1997, the progress made in strengthening macro-economics fundamentals may now be derailed.

"There must be concerted efforts to strengthen government-business dialogues and feedback, and to continue with a pragmatic approach to ensure a predictable and secure business environment.

"It is also important to introduce measures which can stimu-

late global economic recovery and growth," he said in his speech when opening the 4th World Fui Chiu Community Convention here today.

There are some 1,200 Fui Chiu participants from 13 countries including Taiwan, Britain, Australia, Canada, Brunei and Trinidad attending the three-day convention which ends tomorrow.

He said Malaysia will continue to adopt liberal and market-oriented policies.

He believes that all stakeholders, including business, labour and government, should work together to maintain a business-enabling environment and expand world trade to overcome the global slowdown.

"This convention provides an important avenue for Fui Chiu clansmen from different countries to take advantage of Malaysia's strong bilateral trade,

investment and business linkages.

"They could promote exports, source imports, encourage investment cross-flows and realise business transactions."

Mahathir added that the Fui Chiu's international business network, intimate knowledge of China's business ethics, environment, customs and work practices, and communication and traditional bonds of clansmanship are value-added factors that give the community a competitive edge in accessing China's vast market.

"The Fui Chiu community should employ this competitive edge to strengthen economic links and realise business transactions between China and their respective countries.

"They should strengthen and expand their ties beyond community relationships into business alliances," he added.