

PM blames greedy jobbers

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Selling of contracts stalls computer lab projects

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun: The practice of bumiputra contractors selling their contracts to others is the cause of the failure to complete construction of computer laboratories for schools in Peninsular Malaysia, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said that projects were always abandoned when they involved bumiputra contractors because many of them prefer to sell their contracts to third parties who would then sell them to fourth and even fifth parties for quick gains.

"We want to give bumiputra contractors a chance, but they sell to others and these people in turn sell to others. Then the final party to do it is often unable to complete it because the profit is so small," Bernama reported.

Mahathir was speaking to reporters after attending Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Abdul Hamid Zainal Abidin's Hari Raya open house in Bandar Tun Hussein Onn here.

He was asked to comment on a news report today on the failure of contractors to complete the construction of nearly 85% of the projects, although the Education Ministry had extended the completion period three times for four main contractors.

Mahathir said the cabinet will study the actual cause for the delays after the new year.

Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the Education Ministry has been directed to set a timeframe for the contractors

Find out reason for delay in completing computer labs: Abdullah

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to complete the projects.

The ministry should call on these contractors to find out the reasons for the delay, he added.

"Maybe these contractors have too many contracts in hand, which could

be why they are not able to complete the projects within the stipulated time," he said after visiting flood victims of a mudslide at the Gunung Pulai recreational forest in Johor this evening.

Abdullah said the ministry should find out the reason for the problem so

that construction of these labs can be completed as soon as possible.

In SEREMBAN, Negri Sembilan Menteri Besar Tan Sri Isa Samad said only seven of the 197 computer laboratories planned in the state have been completed.

He said 15 projects have

been cancelled because the contractors have not commenced work at all.

"The Education Ministry must look into this matter so that it doesn't happen again in future," Mohd Isa told reporters after closing a camp for intending haj pilgrims.