

# 'Heads of department need to be hands-on'

Nst 19 FEB 2001

SERI KEMBANGAN, Sun. — Heads of departments play an important role in creating a professional and effective civil service, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight.

Senior officials in the service, Dr Mahathir said, should apply new approaches and be a hands-on person to upgrade professionalism in their departments.

He added that many foreign countries look highly on the Malaysian civil service and some even sent their officials here to learn.

"There are many talented people in the civil service and I have worked with several chief secretaries, all of whom were dedicated to their work," said Dr Mahathir during a farewell dinner to former chief secretary Tan Sri Abdul Halim Ali.

Abdul Halim, Dr Mahathir said, was dedicated and hardworking

and had helped overcome several problems and was responsible for implementing ideas like the electronic Government, during his tenure.

Dr Mahathir said he hoped Abdul Halim's successor, Tan Sri Samsudin Osman, would follow Abdul Halim's footsteps and further improve the civil service.

Later in his speech, Abdul Halim thanked the Prime Minister and other civil servants for their cooperation during his tenure.

"In my 35 years of service, I have seen a lot of changes in the civil service. Civil servants should be thankful that the Government is sensitive to their needs," he said.

He also called on heads of department to lead by example and adopt a hands-on approach in dealing with their subordinates and the public.