

Malaysians urged to return and start businesses

OSAKA: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad urged Malaysians who have acquired knowledge and skills overseas to return home to venture into business or backyard industries.

He said the Government was willing to help them start businesses with the experience and knowledge they had gained while working with foreign companies.

"We will try to help by attracting foreign small and medium industries to go into joint ventures with our companies.

"Let's start on a small scale because the capital will also be small," he said.

Those lacking capital should

save up and seek the support of local investors, the Prime Minister said at a dialogue with about 100 Malaysian students here.

To another question, Dr Mahathir, who is on a four-day working visit here, said that Malaysians were getting more competent in various fields and larger numbers of locals were setting up factories that were on par with foreign companies.

He was hopeful that the numbers would increase over the years and they would eventually take over from foreign direct investors.

Asked what he expected from students in Japan, he

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said that apart from acquiring skills and knowledge, they should practise the Japanese culture of being courteous, disciplined and hardworking.

To another question, Dr Mahathir said the Look East Policy that was introduced in the early 1980s was still relevant although Japan was facing persistent economic problems.

The Prime Minister said he considered Japan as a model which should be emulated by Malaysia, especially its capability in high technology and its work culture which stressed discipline and diligence.

"Japan rose from the ruins

of World War II to become an economic giant.

"It is facing problems today because it is too eager to follow the Western way quickly," he said.

On a suggestion that more foreign works be translated into the national language to help in the development of Malaysia — as had been done even by developed countries like Germany, France and Japan — Dr Mahathir said that such efforts were hampered by lack of people available or willing to do the job.

Dr Mahathir reiterated that it was not a case of him not giving priority to the Malay language — he had in fact

written on its importance in a newspaper article — but rather, that he also realised the need to be proficient in English as a tool to acquire knowledge and for international matters like commerce.

On tertiary education, he said that in 10 to 20 years, Malaysia might have enough universities to cater to local needs.

"But it is good if some people are sent overseas as education is always developing.

"By getting exposure overseas, Malaysians will continue learning from developments taking place there," he said.

— By LIM CHYE KHIM