'School lab issue complicated'

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PUTRAJAYA: The issue concerning the building of computer laboratories in schools is a complicated matter and the authorities should be given the chance to identify and rectify the problems, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

He said that in other countries, if there were a contract it would usually go to the "best" man who, usually, was also the "biggest" man.

And he would do a good job of it, the Prime Minister added.

But in Malaysia we have to take into consideration small-scale contractors and bumiputra contractors.

"We also have to consider their qualifications," he told reporters after attending a Hari Raya open house at Wisma Putra here yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said pointing fingers and blaming' others would not solve the matter.

The Education Ministry and Pintar Teknologi Bumiasia JV Sdn Bhd, the main contractor appointed to build the laboratories, have been at loggerheads in recent weeks over incomplete work.

While the ministry maintains that the delay is due to the contractor's shortcomings and is reportedly planning to terminate the contract, the company alleges that bureaucracy at state and district education departments as well as schools caused the delay.

The company also complained of problems with the sites earmarked for the school laboratories.