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PM: Malays should look closer at themselves

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Malay entrepreneurs must discard negative values and stop blaming others for their shortcomings if they wanted to improve themselves.

Dr Mahathir said the Malay business community should assess itself to identify weaknesses.

"After 44 years of independence, after numerous policies, despite the setting-up of billions (of ringgit) of development funds... it is a fact that we are yet to achieve the intended target.

"So we must take a closer look at ourselves. What went wrong? Is it the lack of funds and facilities,... or is it simply because of our attitude and negative values?" Dr Mahathir said.

He added that the non-repayment of study loans extended by the Government was one example of this attitude.

He said Malay students who failed to repay loans not only deprived other students, but also tarnished the image of the community.

Dr Mahathir said their irresponsible behaviour had an adverse effect on the community as banks had grown reluctant to extend loans.

It was reported today that the Public Service Department had only managed to recover RM100 million of the RM2 billion in study loans extended to students since 1987.

The majority of these students were Malays.

Dr Mahathir warned that if students continued to do this they would never succeed as nobody would provide them education loans in future.

"You must think not only of yourself, but also your community ... when you behave like that the whole community will be tainted by your behaviour," he said.

The Prime Minister was speaking at the launch of Dewan Muda (Young Entrepreneurs chamber) of the Malay Chamber of Commerce Malaysia (DPMM) today.

In his hour-long speech, Dr Mahathir said Malay entrepreneurs should learn from their Chinese counterparts on how hard work and trade skills could ensure success.

"We cannot always envy and blame others because they are successful, we must instead emulate their good values. If they are hardworking, we should also be hardworking.

"So far our achievements do not match the Government's efforts to uplift the living standard of the Malays," he said, urging the thousands of Malay entrepreneurs present at the function to act as catalyst for change.

Dr Mahathir said there was nothing wrong in emulating good values from other races who had proven to be resilient and successful despite the many restrictions.

He warned the Malays that they could not expect to be protected and accorded special privileges forever as nobody could predict the future.

"We cannot expect the Government to protect us all the time," he said, adding that the Malays should also strive to change their culture which placed minimal emphasis on acquiring knowledge.

Dr Mahathir said studies showed that progressive races in the world all held to positive values which enabled them to be united and move forward.

He said Malay entrepreneurs should also be realistic in their business ventures as ambition alone would not ensure success.

"If you're only capable of running a restaurant, don't set up a hotel

because you don't have the capability, unless you grow step by step and acquire the necessary business skills through experience.

"It is like making a dress without measuring the cloth," Dr Mahathir said.

The Prime Minister lauded the Malay Chamber of Commerce's move to set up the Young Entrepreneurs chamber.

"If you can grow and be successful, the achievements could speak for you and attract others to follow your path," he advised.

Dewan Muda chairman, Azlan Shah Jaffril, in his speech, told those present that the chamber was not an avenue for members to fight for government contracts, but a platform to improve themselves.

Refuting claims that the chamber aimed to be a pressure group, Azlan said it was to create an excellent working network among Malay entrepreneurs.

"We will also undertake awareness campaigns of the funds set up by the Government. Many Malay entrepreneurs are still in the dark over this," he said.

Also present was DPMM president Datuk Seri Abdul Rahman Maidin.  
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