

PM: Learn from the Chinese

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PETALING JAYA: The world has much to learn from the Chinese, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

They have contributed to the growth and development of the countries they live in, he said when opening the 7th World Chinese Entrepreneurs Convention.

“Through entrepreneurship, willingness to take risks, and appreciation of the needs of their adopted countries, overseas Chinese have benefited both themselves and the local economies.”

Nevertheless, he said, their success and their wealth often aroused the jealousy and envy of the indigenous people.

Hence, overseas Chinese should be more visible in the nation-building process of their host country.

“Whenever possible, they should have true partnership with the locals. The locals, on their part, must make serious attempts to learn the business and entrepreneurial skills of the Chinese,” he told the 3,000 convention participants.

Mahathir said the relationship between the races in Malaysia is a symbiotic one where the Malays provide a good, if not perfect, adminis-

tration and the Chinese use their entrepreneurship and the business skills to enrich the country.

“Some may say this is cronyism between the ruling indigenous elites and the Chinese tycoons. Cronyism is a phenomenon found in every country, the difference is only one of degree,” he said.

“The prominent among them will inevitably be recognised and known by members of the government. It is impossible for the rich and generous to remain in obscurity.”

“To prove there is no cronyism is to ensure no one succeeds in business in developing countries. Everyone should be poor or make a living as small-time retailers.”

Mahathir said this situation will allow giant foreign corporations to dominate the local economies and the locals would be totally dependent on them.

Hence, he said, between being dominated by ethnically different foreigners and getting a share of the wealth generated by the Chinese, countries should prefer the local Chinese.

He said the Chinese are prepared to share their wealth and not try to dominate the world.

There are some 60 million overseas Chinese residing in 140 countries with an estimated wealth of over US\$1.5 trillion (RM5.7 trillion).