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## Quota for bumi firms 'necessary'

**KUALA LUMPUR:** A quota for bumiputra companies to get government contracts is necessary, otherwise they will end up without any job, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

"If there is no quota, bumiputras may not get anything."

He was asked whether the 60% quota for bumiputras for government contracts and procurements, introduced in the Eighth Malaysia Plan Mid-Term Review, amounted to a step backwards in the move to make bumiputras competitive.

Speaking to reporters at the Parliament lobby after tabling the Mid-Term Review yesterday, Dr Mahathir said he

noticed that bumiputras had been getting contracts only from the Government.

"They are afraid to get contracts from the private sector because they feel they will not be successful. That's why they rely on the Government."

He added that although he did not like them being reliant on the Government, they would end up not getting any work at all if government contracts were not given them.

Nevertheless, Dr Mahathir said such contracts would be given to responsible, competent and capable bumiputras.

"People keep asking us to give to as many as possible. So we gave to everyone but they

included the incompetent ones and they messed up everything," he said.

He added that because of this, the Government now had to start all over again and assess the competency of bumiputra companies.

Asked whether he was satisfied with the bumiputras' achievement so far, Dr Mahathir said he was not because the 30% bumiputra equity ownership target, supposed to have been achieved by the end of 1990, was still not attained. The level stands at 18% today.

"Although the actual amount is very big - it is about 400 times more than in 1970 - the others are also growing," he said. \* \* \*