

06 JAN 2003

Mahathir-Satisfied

DR M: MARKED CHANGE IN SERVICE QUALITY OF CIVIL SERVICE

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 6 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today he saw significant changes in the service quality of the civil service after being at the helm of the country's administration for 21 years.

The Prime Minister said: "I've never been satisfied with anything but I am quite satisfied with their standards, improvement and quality. If not, Malaysia will not have developed like this."

He was speaking at a media conference after the fourth Public Service premier assembly where he also opened the Management Technology Centre of the National Institute of Public Administration (Intan) here.

"The civil service had constantly improved its performance and efficiency. If we see any area that needs to be given attention, we'll act specifically to improve it.

"Yes, there is bureaucracy everywhere. Although there is bureaucracy in Malaysia, it is not as bad as in some countries. In England, an approval to repair a house takes two years and to start a project up to 13 years," he said.

Dr Mahathir said it took 14 years to build the fifth terminal at the Heathrow Airport in London.

"We are not as bad as that. We are quite efficient," he said.

On the collision between "RSS Courageous," an anti-submarine ship of the Singapore Navy and Dutch-registered "ANL Indonesia," a container vessel, near Pulau Batu Puteh waters on Friday night, Dr Mahathir said: "I don't think it could have been avoided, ships collide.

"But one of the problems of this big container ship carrying 6,000 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUS) travels at 21 knots. When it has to turn to avoid something, it takes a long time. That's how crashes happen," he said.

He said ships at sea should maintain a certain distance between one another.

The captains of the two ill-fated ships should have monitored the radar screen closely.

Replying to a question on "forward defence," Dr Mahathir said Malaysia never had any intention to go to war with any country.

"We don't (wage war) but it is the press that keep asking us. We have to respond and I didn't say Malaysia wants to go to a war," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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