

21/06/2004

Red tape still a bottleneck to business

By Ahmad A. Talib

I WISH young businessmen and entrepreneurs like Faleigh would attend management courses and learn the various aspects of running a business.

If they don't attend courses, they should look for mentors and listen to them. Tycoons like Vincent and Mus, and many others, could inspire people like Faleigh. Or at least give them some useful ideas on how to get ahead and stay there.

Vincent and Mus are very successful businessmen, having carved a name for themselves on the national landscape. They didn't make it overnight. Neither did they become household names without blood, sweat and tears. I met both a few days ago and saw what made them tick. To be more precise, I got a glimpse of their tenacity and shrewdness.

They are individuals who saw opportunities and worked on them. Both exude confidence and passion for their work. They also know quite intimately the workings of government, and they believe that a pro-business government can make a difference to the national economy. When necessary, they are not shy of sharing their views and thoughts with the authorities if they believe that such ideas will enrich their businesses and help the economy.

They are also not averse to giving feedback to national and state leaders, as shown at the one-day Dialogue on Kedah 2010 held at the scenic Langkawi Lagoon on the Island of Legends last week. They joined politicians, other businessmen, civil servants, members of academia and social activists for long and detailed discussions on business and development for the northern State.

Hosted by Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain, the dialogue reviewed and identified bottlenecks impeding Kedah's economy from progressing further and faster. Referred to by many as "Pak Tuan", Syed Razak had also invited former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad to share his thoughts on his home State.

While there were notable absentees among top corporate leaders, the discussions were substantial, interesting, frank and somewhat revealing.

Business leaders and participants who attended the dialogue joined Vincent and Mus in giving their views. While expressing their appreciation to the State Government for supporting their ventures, Vincent and Mus were quite vocal about bureaucratic red tape slowing down projects.

While they could see the need for some procedures to be strictly followed, they were also unhappy with the "lack of urgency and sense of purpose".

They emphasised that "time is money", and the private sector needed all the support spelt out in the "Malaysia Inc" philosophy promoted by the Government and subscribed to by the private sector.

In the final analysis, participants argued that no well-laid plan could succeed without an aggressive private sector married to an open and helpful civil service.

Vincent and Mus were quick to praise the visionary policies introduced by the Government over the last couple of decades, and were equally sure that more is being done to take the private sector further afield, beyond national boundaries.

Youngsters like Faleigh would do themselves a favour by learning from the ups and downs of these high-fliers.

Kudos, too, to the Kedah Government. Having won the last general

election convincingly, Syed Razak and his team can now set about implementing the Kedah Maju 2010 blueprint vigorously. The plan is to make Kedah a developed State by 2010. Victory in the March 21 elections was a vindication of Syed Razak's Kedah Maju plan, and the State should gear up to translate the plan into action.

(END)