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Construction industry players must deliver

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THE Construction Industry Development Board is reported to have formulated a master plan aimed at giving a new image to the industry, making it truly responsible and professional.

Works Minister Datuk Seri Samy Vellu was quoted as saying at the 46th anniversary of the Master Builders Association that builders, architects and engineers must increase their level of professionalism and competence.

It is time for all construction industry players to undertake the measures for the betterment of the sector.

As pointed out by the president of the Master Builders Association, Lau Mun Cheong, builders have always been subjected to public scrutiny and been at the receiving end of unflattering comments, being described as unethical and insensitive to the needs of purchasers. They are also accused of lacking concern for the environment.

Complaints about cost-cutting, leading to poor quality and shoddy construction work, are still numerous. Problems of such nature can tarnish the image of the industry and must be addressed.

Only responsible and successful builders committed to professionalism in their respective organisations can overcome such problems.

All contractors should be more conscious of their performance and ensure they are able to deliver satisfactorily. It does not help their image that they are often good at winning contracts but poor at delivering on them.

They are quick to point fingers at others when problems arise, but slow in acknowledging their own shortcomings and failures.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in a recent comment said many Malay contractors were under-performing, a price the Government might no longer be prepared to pay.

He was quoted as saying: "I am sorry if we can no longer give contracts to people who cannot do the job."

A case in point is the recent computer lab fiasco. The contractor engaged was incompetent. The construction was shoddy and the laboratories were not safe for occupation.

The main contractor did not do a good job in managing the sub-contractors and suppliers, resulting in serious defects being detected in the computer labs in Bera and many other schools.

Even the Ministry of Education agreed that the contractor was incompetent to complete its obligations.

The issue, then, is how to improve the performance and work quality of our contractors, particularly Malay contractors.

This is an issue that must be seriously addressed by the fraternity of contractors who need to reinvent themselves to survive and compete on equal terms with the best in the business.

Contractors and others involved in the construction industry must be committed to professionalism so that the quality of their work will not be compromised in any way.