

24/07/2003

PM: Projects will be monitored

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PUTRAJAYA, Wed. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that with immediate effect all Government projects will be monitored by the respective Ministries and the District Offices in the area where the projects are carried out.

The role of project management consultants who were to monitor the development of Government projects would also be reviewed.

In his speech at the opening of the 24th annual general meeting of the Malay Contractors Association of Malaysia at the Prime Minister's Department here, he said previously Government projects were monitored by the Public Works Department but as the number of projects kept increasing, the PWD could not cope.

At present the Government awards about 10,000 contracts per year and as such, said Dr Mahathir, it would be impossible for PWD to monitor their development.

He said that because of this the Government decided on consultants to keep tabs on contractors and projects but this too seems to have failed.

The Government would scrutinise all projects and later decide if the consultants were still relevant.

In his speech, Dr Mahathir chided a certain group of Malay contractors who were bent on becoming instant millionaires by securing contracts from the Government even though they had no skills or capability to carry out the stipulated project.

"If you can't afford or do not possess the capability don't simply try to do something.

"We have to be realistic and not be greedy.

"If you hold to the noble values of being sincere and trustworthy I'm sure you can succeed but if you are only interested about your profit, at whatever cost it may be, then it's you who'll be at the losing end.

"Not only that, you will also bring down the dignity and the reputation of the Malays as a whole," he said.

Comparing Malay contractors with their Chinese counterparts, Dr Mahathir said that although all of them faced similar problems during the Asian financial crisis, the Chinese contractors were able to recover sooner than the Malay contractors despite the Chinese not enjoying the Bumiputera status and all the privileges that went with it.

"We should ask ourselves why is this so. Is it because they are simply better than the Malays or is it because of their business culture, commitment and sincerity in carrying out their responsibility?

"In the final analysis, it all depends on us. It's our attitude, the type of values we subscribe to and whether we are sincere in what we do..., the Government cannot be blamed if in future many Malay contractors fail to obtain any contract from the Government," he said.

The Prime Minister also challenged Malay contractors to prove their worth by competing for projects from the private sector.

"I wish to see Malay contractors proving their capability in the private sector and also by venturing beyond our boundaries.

"If you can secure contracts from these sources than you are really good," he added.

He said that although the number of Malay contractors has grown by leaps and bounds in the last 30 years the number of successful ones was still low.

"Those days, I wanted to see the profiles of Malay entrepreneurs in the New Straits Times business section. Now we can read about them almost everyday but I'm not satisfied with the proportion of successful Malays to the total number of Malays in the country."