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## Dr M: End 'crutch' mentality

JITRA: Former premier Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Bumiputeras must stop depending on the government to succeed in business.

"This 'crutch' mentality must stop. But I don't think the time is right yet for the government to stop helping them because we have not achieved the New Economic Policy.

"However, there will come a time when Bumiputera businessmen can no longer depend on the government for projects or in instances where the government is not sympathetic towards them," he said at the Kedah Malay Contractors Association charity dinner here on Friday.

Present were Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Azizan Abdul Razak, Malaysian Malay Contractors Association president Datuk Mokhtar Samad and its Kedah chapter president Ahmad Fatahi Omar.

Dr Mahathir said poor financial management was another factor for

the Bumiputera's failure in business.

"They are just very poor in managing their resources, especially finances, always making poor business decisions.

"They also fail to equip themselves with the necessary skills and knowledge when venturing into business," he added.

Citing a personal experience, Dr Mahathir said when he was prime minister, a friend approached him for help to ask a petroleum company to continue supplying fuel to his petrol kiosk.

"I may have been the prime minister then, but I did not have the power to direct a company to heed his request.

"I later found out that the friend had mismanaged his finances and that was the last I heard from him," he said.

On another instance, he said, another friend wanted to borrow some

money to start a business but the business failed and he absconded.

Dr Mahathir also pointed to the failures of many Class F Malay contractors despite being awarded contracts to build computer laboratories by the government.

"They secured the contracts but outsourced the works to so many levels that it became unprofitable for the sub-contractors.

"That is why we had so many problems with the structures since the contractors and sub-contractors used cheap materials, resulting in poor workmanship to cut their losses," he said.

"I know what I have to say tonight is not very encouraging but that is the reality. Stop being dependent on the government and start managing your finances well.

"You don't have anyone to blame but yourselves if you fail in business," he said.