

# Politics and our progress — as Mahathir sees it

FULL REPORT OF WEDNESDAY'S TV INTERVIEW

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Dr. Mahathir

**KUALA LUMPUR, Fri.** — Deputy Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamed wants young Malays to take a positive step in politics to help safeguard and uphold the country's independence.

"They should also have an appreciation towards the country's independence because independence will not last without appreciation," he added during a question-and-answer session with journalists on TV Malaysia's "30 Minutes" programme on Wednesday night.

Utusan Melayu journalist A. R. Kamaluddin asked Dr. Mahathir whether it was true that Umno was now weak and how its strength should be maintained.

Dr. Mahathir replied: "Umno does not belong to its leaders. It belongs to the people. What we see nowadays is that our young do not have a background similar to that of their parents and people of the older generation.

"They were brought up after independence, so they would never realise how difficult and bitter it was to live under colonialist rule. They, therefore, cannot compare the periods before and

after the independence. "The older generation, on the other hand, can compare the period now with that of the bitter experiences when living under a colonial master. The young ones cannot appreciate what independence is.

"I would therefore like to remind the young to take a positive step in politics, to appreciate the country's independence and safeguard and maintain the independence. Otherwise, this country will one day fall into somebody's hand."

## Economic policy

Encik Kamaluddin had earlier asked Dr. Mahathir whether it was true that the New Economic Policy had led to the poor becoming poorer and the rich richer, and whether Dr. Mahathir as the new Deputy Prime Minister would look into this or suggest that the policy be reviewed.

Dr. Mahathir: "I would like to correct this general public view that the New Economic Policy has led the poor to become poorer and the rich richer."

"Let me ask here whether the one who became rich was once a poor man or whether he be-

came richer because he was already a rich man before the implementation of the policy.

"The New Economic Policy is aimed at helping the bumiputras to correct their economic imbalance and if the rich become richer we can say that the rich are also enjoying the New Economic Policy.

"For example, if a man is rich, it will be easy for him to obtain help from banks and other sources. We in the free enterprise system cannot blame him for becoming richer because it will contradict the system.

"However, the poor, too, have their opportunities to become rich if they are prepared and willing to equip themselves to venture into business.

"I do not deny that the rich may become richer while the poor poorer, but I am certain that this will not be a result of the New Economic Policy."

Mr. Wee Chin Yuen, of Sin Chew, asked the Deputy Prime Minister about his book, *The Malay Dilemma*, which exposed the problems and difficulties of the

that we found it difficult before to see Malays carrying out business in Kuala Lumpur. We can now find them doing business at the various complexes here.

"However, I also believe that it is difficult for the Government and the Malays to determine their success within this short period. It is due to this that the Government set a target and we have to work towards this target."

To another question by Encik Kamaluddin that a leading local economist had commented that it would be impossible for the Government to achieve its 30 per cent target for Malay participation in business, Dr. Mahathir said:

"Economic problems are difficult to determine. Economists will always give their prediction or forecast. So, it is due to this uncertainty that the Government has to fix a target of achievement and we have to work towards it."

Encik Samani Amin, assistant editor of *Berita Harian*, asked Dr. Mahathir whether he would write another book either before or after *Malay Dilemma* is allowed to be sold to the public. Also, did Dr. Mahathir have new ideas to intensify the participation of Malays in trade and industry?

Dr. Mahathir: "Whether the ban on my book will be lifted or not is not a problem, because most of my ideas in *Malay Dilemma* have been adopted by the Government in its New Economic Policy.

"But I believe that the Government will not practise nationalisation in this country because it will not help the Government achieve the 30 per cent target for bumiputras in economic activities by 1990.

"Instead, the Government has set up several agencies like Pernas and Petronas to help the Malays achieve the set target.

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Malays and whether Dr. Mahathir, after being appointed the second strongest man in the new Cabinet, would find that the New Economic Policy had been sufficient to overcome the problems of the Malays. If not Mr. Wee asked, would Dr. Mahathir and the new Cabinet reconsider the policy.

Dr. Mahathir: "It is true that the book has been banned since 1969. Most people believe that the book is confined to the problem of the Malays. But it should be noted that I also analysed the economic problems faced by other communities.

### Target

"I also analysed their weakness, the hindrances towards progress and suggested several remedies. I found that some suggestions that I made have already been adopted by the Government. And I am satisfied with this.

"This is clearly indicated in the Government's New Economic Policy where there is stress on correcting the economic imbalances of the races, especially the Malays.

"Another example is

"Nationalisation of foreign industries and properties will not be accepted by the Government because it will not be beneficial to do so."

### MIT

Dr. Mahathir, who is also the Education Minister, said the situation at the Mara Institute of Technology had returned to normal. The problem was settled within hours.

He also spoke of being labelled as an "ultra-nationalist" by his "political foes" and said he would clean his image.

On the Cabinet reshuffle, he said it had helped to end speculation since the death of Tun Abdul Razak.

"I do not know how the people will respond to the new line-up but it is certain that it would end the speculation which if prolonged might lead to an unhealthy climate."

He said it was up to the people to judge whether he was capable of carrying out his duties.