

**MAHATHIR - ETHNIC**

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PETALING JAYA, MARCH 29 (BERNAMA)--THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD, TONIGHT DISPELLED THE ASSUMPTION THAT SOME ETHNIC GROUPS IN MALAYSIA ARE LESS CAPABLE OR LESS PRODUCTIVE THAN OTHERS BECAUSE OF THEIR BACKGROUND.

HE SAID: +THIS IS A DANGEROUSLY MISLEADING ASSUMPTION AND HAS BEEN REPEATEDLY PROVEN FALSE, FOR I HAVE REPORTS FROM CONTENTED COMPANIES, EVEN IN RURAL AREAS WITH LESS SOPHISTICATED LABOUR AVAILABLE, THAT GIVEN THE PROPER TRAINING, THE LABOR EMPLOYED PROVED AS ADEPT DISCIPLINED AND HARDWORKING AS COULD BE WISHED FOR.

HE ADDED THAT IN MALAYSIA, +LABOUR IS READILY AVAILABLE, AND WHATEVER ITS BACKGROUND OR ETHNIC ORIGIN, IT IS UNIFORMLY GOOD.+

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR, WHO IS ALSO THE MINISTER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY, SAID THIS WHEN ADDRESSING THE MALAYSIAN ASSOCIATION OF PRODUCTIVITY NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY CENTRE DINNER MEETING ON +THE INVESTMENT CLIMATE MALAYSIA+.

HE EARLIER OUTLINED CERTAIN FACTORS WHICH CONTRIBUTED TOWARDS MAINTAINING A GOOD INVESTMENT CLIMATE IN THE COUNTRY. --BERNAMA MORE 2905/MD

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THEY INCLUDED THE GOVERNMENT POLICY WHICH HAD CERTAINLY NOT DAMPENED INVESTMENT BUT NEVERTHELESS WAS NOT ENOUGH BY ITSELF TO CREATE A GOOD INVESTMENT CLIMATE. THE POLICY MUST BE INTERPRETED IN PRACTICAL TERMS.

POLICIES TO ENCOURAGE INVESTMENT MUST BE TEMPERED WITH THE NEED TO REGULATE THEM SO THAT THE OBJECTIVES OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PROMOTING THE INTERESTS OF THE NATION AND PEOPLE WERE ACHIEVED, HE SAID.

THE FORMULATION AND APPLICATION OF REGULATORY LAWS MUST HAVE AN EFFECT ON THE INVESTMENT CLIMATE AND THIS EFFECT MIGHT BE GOOD OR BAD NOT ONLY BECAUSE THE LAWS WERE EITHER PROMOTIVE OR RESTRICTIVE, BUT ALSO BECAUSE OF THE NATURE OF INVESTMENTS.

THUS, PROTECTIVE TARIFF LAWS AND PIONEER STATUS WERE ONLY MEANINGFUL IF THEY GAVE AN ADVANTAGE TO A CALCULATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE.

SECONDLY, WAS THE USING OF LAWS AS A MEANS OF SOCIAL REDRESSAL. --BERNAMA MORE 2224/MD

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+THE INDUSTRIAL COORDINATING ACT SPOILING THE INVESTMENT CLIMATE. BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, IF THERE IS NO ICA, THERE MIGHT BE A REACTION FROM ONE SECTION OF THE POPULATION, WHICH COULD NOT ONLY SPOIL THE INVESTMENT CLIMATE BUT ALSO DESTROY IT ALTOGETHER, + HE ADDED.

HENCE A POLICY TO ENCOURAGE INVESTMENT CAN ONLY BE MEANINGFUL IF THE INTERPRETATION OF THAT POLICY IN TERMS OF LAWS AND REGULATIONS ARE NON-RESTRICTIVE OR MINIMALLY RESTRICTIVE, +

THE THIRD FACTOR WAS THE ACTUAL IMPLEMENTATION OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND LAWS.

AS GOOD LAWS COULD BECOME BAD THROUGH IMPLEMENTATION, THE MINISTER SAID A BUREAUCRACY THAT UNDERSTOOD GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND LAWS AND APPLIED THEM FIRMLY, FAIRLY AND CONSISTENTLY IN A PRAGMATIC MANNER WOULD CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS A GOOD INVESTMENT CLIMATE.

FOURTHLY WAS THE PROVISION OF GOOD INFRASTRUCTURE FACILITIES WHICH WOULD NOT ONLY ENCOURAGE SETTING UP OF BUT ALSO ILLUSTRATED IN A TANGIBLE WAY THE COMMITMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT TO PROMOTING INVESTMENT. --BERNAMA MORE 2231/MD

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THE FIFTHS FACTOR WAS THE POLITICAL CLIMATE OF WHICH THE MOST IMPORTANT FEATURES WERE ITS STABILITY AND CONSISTENCY.

A PRO-INVESTMENT GOVERNMENT, HE ADDED, MUST BE STABLE AND DURABLE IF IT WAS TO CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS A GOOD INVESTMENT CLIMATE.

A STEADY, STABLE AND EXPENDING ECONOMY WOULD ALSO CREATE THE KIND OF CONFIDENCE THAT WOULD HELP INVESTMENT DECISION MAKERS.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SINGLED OUT THE LAST FACTOR - PRODUCTIVITY - AS THE MOST IMPORTANT BECAUSE PROFITS WERE DIRECTLY AND PROPORTIONATELY LINKED TO IT.

+A SITUATION THAT IS CONDUCTIVE TO HIGH PRODUCTIVITY WILL CLEARLY CONTRIBUTE IN ESTABLISHING A GOOD INVESTMENT CLIMATE. WHERE PRODUCTIVITY IS LOW, INVESTMENT WILL BE POOR, + HE ADDED. --BERNAMA

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DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR THEN CALLED UPON THE MALAYSIAN ASSOCIATION OF PRODUCTIVITY AND THE NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY CENTRE TO STRIVE TO INCREASE AND ENHANCE THE NATION'S PRODUCTIVITY LEVEL.

THEY COULD BEGIN BY INITIATING PUBLICITY CAMPAIGNS TO MAKE MANAGERMENTS IN MALAYSIA AWARE THAT PRODUCTIVITY WAS THEIR RESPONSIBILITY AND THAT THERE WERE WAYS TO IMPROVE AND BOOST UP PRODUCTIVITY.

+YOUR PUBLICITY CAMPAIGNS COULD ALSO BE TAILORED FOR THE LABOUR FORCE IN THE COUNTRY, INCLCATING IN THEM A SENSE OF PRIDE IN THEIR PRODUCTIVITY, AND THE AMBITION TO DEVELOP IT FURTHER, + HE ADDED. --  
BERNAMA 2302/MD