

Mahathir: We must stand on own feet

NT 15 APR 1981

BATU PAHAT, Tues. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said Malaysia should stand on her own feet, building her own ships and assembling her own weapons and armoury.

The country should turn to the foreign market only for sophisticated goods.

The Deputy Prime Minister said this was one of the goals of the New Economic Policy — to create a self-sufficient and self-reliant country.

Launching the Exposition on Johore Bumiputra Economic Achievement and a convention at Kampung Kenangan, Dato Onn, here, he added:

"We must have all these to ensure that we would be free of foreign pressure."

Criticised

To realise this objective, Dato Seri Dr Mahathir urged Malaysian students on government scholarship to always put the country's interest above anything else.

"They must realise that the degrees or diplomas that they bring back are not for the sole purpose of becoming an executive.

"It is the knowledge and skill that they gather that is important for the country," Dato Seri Dr Mahathir said.

The Deputy Prime Minister said Malaysia cannot afford to be

perpetually dependent on other countries.

He criticised some executives, including bumiputras, who only look forward to working in air-conditioned rooms.

"How can such people build ships or assemble locomotives from such small rooms," he said.

"Let alone building big machinery these bumiputras cannot even build their own mosques simply because they fail to be directly involved in these projects, especially in heavy and semi-heavy industries.

"More often than not when discussing the NEP, their first impression is to go into business.

They forget that the scope of the NEP is much wider," he said.

He said the government is embarking on a project to encourage the Malays to go into the construction industry, and the first major task is to let the construction of the Universiti Teknologi Kebangsaan complex in Johore Baru to be wholly handled by bumiputras.

"Malay youths from all over the country will be selected for this project. They will be given on-the-job training in various aspects of the construction industry."

He praised the State government for holding the exposition as it would show the success and failures of bumiputras in the last 10 years.

"The exposition is timely because some successful bumiputras have started to lose their sense of direction."

The exposition, he said, will provide some guidance for the bumiputras and dispel misconception in certain quarters.